WEDNESDAY
April 17, 2024

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
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BJP Ka Sankalp
Modi Ki Guarantee
Manifesto 2024

Helping the poor

- Free ration will continue for the next 5 years.
- Becoming self-reliant in production of pulses, edible oils and vegetables.
- Clean drinking tap water for every house and reduction of electricity bill to zero through PM Surya Ghar Yojna.

Honouring the farmers

- Continuation of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi and Crop Insurance Scheme.
- Timely increase in MSP. Increasing farmers' income in every aspect.
- Establishment of Shri Ann (Millets) as super food, Expansion of PM Matsya Sampada Yojana and dairy cooperative societies.

Women empowerment

- Three crore rural women will become Lakhpati didis.
- Expansion of piped gas connection to households. Ensuring availability of Hostels and Creches for working women.
- Integrate self help groups with the service sector to increase their income.
- Ensuring representation of women in Lok Sabha and State assemblies by implementing Nari Shakti Vandan Act.

Focus on the middle class

- Home ownership for middle class families.
- Ensuring accessible and affordable healthcare at district hospitals, Ayushman Arogya Mandirs and other secondary healthcare centres.
- Expansion of health services, new educational institutes and improvement of infrastructure for ease of life.

Investment to provide better employment opportunities for youth

- Increase in employment opportunities by investing in infrastructure, investment, manufacturing, high value services and start-ups.
- Loan amount under MUDRA Yojna will be doubled to ₹20 Lakh for encouraging employment/ self employment.
- Government recruitment will become more transparent by implementation of law regarding paper leaks and establishment of new institutions of higher education.

Prosperous India through good governance

- Guaranteed strict action against corruption.
- Implementation of Bharatiya Nyay Samhita.
- Introduction of "One Nation, One Election" and "Common Voter List".
- Implementation of Uniform Civil Code according to Article 44 of Constitution.

For labourers

- New scheme to develop modern facilities for truck drivers on the highways.
- Empowerment of gig workers, domestic workers, street workers and other labourers through the e-Shram portal.

Becoming global hub for manufacturing

- Will make India a global hub for manufacturing, this will create lakhs of jobs.
- Guarantee of increasing manufacturing in steel, cement, aluminium, railway, defence, pharmaceutical, electric vehicle, mobile, semi conductor and other sectors.

Priority to the deprived

- Expansion of PM-SVANidhi and Vishwakarma schemes for expanding employment opportunities for OBC, SC, and ST communities.
- Ensuring scholarships for talented students from marginalised sections.
- Special focus on all things related to fishermen such as boat insurance, fish processing unit, timely information through satellite, etc.

Virasat aur Vikas

- All-round development of Ayodhya city and development of other religious places on the lines of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.
- Providing training in Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian languages, and classical music by establishing Thiruvalluvar Cultural Centres across the world.

Strengthening economy through infrastructure

- Making India the world's third-largest economy.
- Expanding the expressway network to 15,000 kms and enhancing services of new airports, highways, and water metros.
- Build new rail lines, new Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat, and Namo Bharat trains, and world-class stations. Minimising the waiting list of rail tickets.
- Dedicated Purvodaya Masterplan for infrastructure development of Eastern India and its coastal and hilly areas.

Senior citizens

- Free health facilities to senior citizens by including them under Ayushman Bharat.
- Special programme for pilgrimage tours of senior citizens.

Phir Ek Baar
Modi Sarkar

Press the lotus button Make BJP win

Published by: Bharatiya Janata Party, 6 A, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi

CMYK J BG-BGE

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STATE OF DEMOCRACY

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Buttler guides Royals to incredible win

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Japanese tech to be used to treat wastewater

BENGALURU
In a step towards making Peenya Industrial Area more eco-friendly, the BWSSB announced plans to introduce advanced Japanese technology to treat chemical wastewater produced in the area. » Page 4

Namma Yatri introduces cab services

BENGALURU
Namma Yatri, the open-mobility app for autorickshaws, introduced cab services in Bengaluru on Tuesday. The app employs a commission-free approach.
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OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 5

29 Maoists shot dead at Kanker in Chhattisgarh

Three senior cadres of CPI (Maoist) are believed to be among the dead; three jawans injured; the operation by BSF, district forces was based on a tip-off that senior members were at the spot

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

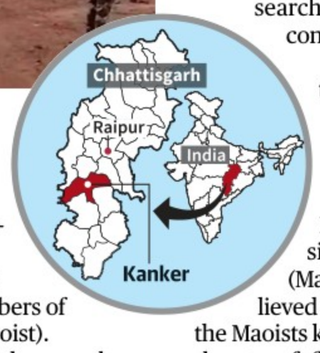
At least 29 Maoists were killed in an operation by security forces at Kanker district in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region on Tuesday. Three senior cadres of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist) are suspected to be among the deceased.

Three jawans were also injured, but are out of danger, the police said.

Based on the number of casualties inflicted, the State police said this is possibly the "biggest encounter ever" in Chhattisgarh.

Nationally, a 2018 operation in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli, in which 37 Naxalites were killed, was the only one where more deaths were reported in recent years.

Security personnel at a post in Chhattisgarh's Kanker after the attack. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



The operation by a joint team of the Kanker District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the Border Security Force (BSF) against the Maoists took place in a forested area that falls under the Chhottebetiya police station area of Kanker, the police said.

The security forces were sent to the spot after a tip-off was received about the presence of senior Divisional Committee (DVC) members of the CPI (Maoist).

"During the search operation, there was an encounter between the forces and the Maoist cadres. During the searches so far, 29 bodies of Maoist cadres have been recovered. AK-47, INSAS, SLR, Carbine 303 and a huge cache of other arms and ammunitions were also recovered from the spot," Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) P. Sundarraj said later, adding that searches were continuing.

According to the BSF, Shankar and Lalita – both DVC members of the North Bastar division of the CPI (Maoist) – are believed to be amongst the Maoists killed in the exchange of fire. Together, they carry a reward of around ₹50 lakh on their heads.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

Ramdev, associate apologise before SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Facing contempt action, self-styled yoga guru Baba Ramdev and his associate Acharya Balkrishna unconditionally apologised in an open court on Tuesday for violating a Supreme Court order to not advertise the herbal products of their company, Patanjali Ayurved. However, the court said they were still "not off the hook" and gave the duo a week to prove they were truly sorry.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi assured the court that his clients would take steps to redeem themselves in the eyes of the law and the public. The court listed the case on April 23.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

X takes down four posts on EC order

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Social media platform X released a letter by the Election Commission (EC) ordering a takedown of four posts by leaders of the YSR Congress Party, the Telugu Desam Party, the AAP and the BJP. The company said it disagrees with the EC order, and that "freedom of expression should extend to political speech".

The company has taken down the posts in India.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

Dwarakish

Actor-producer Dwarakish passes away

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Dwarakish, Kannada actor, producer, and director, passed away in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

He was 81. He suffered a heart attack and passed away in his sleep in the morning at his residence at Electronics City, according to his family.

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NEW DELHI | CHENNAI

Maxwell opens up about why he got himself dropped

The Australian, who has been struggling for form in IPL 2024, says he wanted to give himself a mental and physical break; adds that he would like to comeback and contribute for RCB

K. MURALI KUMAR

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

This is an age when sportspersons are shielded from even the mildest of criticism. In this context, Glenn Maxwell must be praised for volunteering to face the media and answer tough questions.

It came as a surprise when Maxwell walked into the room in the post-match press conference here on Monday. The Australian played no part in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad in the run-fest. And with 32 runs in six IPL games, he has been woefully out of form.

Maxwell made an admirably honest admission when asked if he missed the match due to an injury.

"I went to Faf (du Plessis) and the coaches after the last game and said I felt it was probably time we tried someone else. I have been in this situation in the past where you can keep playing and get yourself deeper into a hole. I think now is actually a good time for me to give myself a bit of a mental and physical break; get my body right. If I'm required to get in during the tournament, I can hopefully get back into a really solid mental and physical space where I can still have an impact," Maxwell stated.

"We have had a pretty big deficiency straight after the PowerPlay, which has been my area of strength over the last couple of seasons. I felt like I wasn't contributing in a positive way with the bat, and with the results and the position we find ourselves on the table, I think it's a good time to give someone else an opportunity to show their wares. Hopefully, someone can make that spot their own," Maxwell added.

> I think now is actually a good time for me to give myself a bit of a mental and physical break.. if I'm required to get in during the tournament, I can hopefully get back into a really solid mental and physical space

Fickle nature of T20s

The 35-year-old did not put a timeline on the duration of his break, but he will hope to get back to form in time for 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup, which commences in a little over a month. Maxwell was unable to pinpoint exactly what went wrong this season, putting it down to the fickle nature of T20 cricket.

"T20 cricket can be like that sometimes – it's a pretty fickle game. Even if you look at the first game, I ran one off the middle of the bat to the 'keeper. I picked up the length really well, saw a scoring opportunity, but opened the face a little bit too much. When you are going well, that goes wide of the gloves, you get a boundary, you are four off one, and you are away for the tournament.

"I probably just haven't got away – it's as simple as that. In the first few games, I feel I made reasonably good decisions, but I was still finding ways to get out. It can happen in T20 cricket and when it snowballs like that, you can go searching and try too hard and forget the basics of the game," Maxwell said.

The hard-hitting batter went through a similar bad run of form in 2020, when he played for Kings XI Punjab. Maxwell scored only 108 runs in 11 innings – in a season best forgotten. In later interviews, Maxwell stated that KXIP team management did not utilise his full potential by keeping him low down the order.

Different scenario

Asked if the RCB team management could do more to support him, Maxwell said: "That was probably a different scenario. Back then the thing that was hurting me was that I was bowling really well. So I was actually playing more as a spinner who was used at the back end with the bat. We had K.L. Rahul and Mayank Agarwal, who were the two leading run-scorers in the competition at that time, so there wasn't a lot of balls left in the game for me. So I wasn't able to get any match rhythm. And when I was, it was only for a few balls here and there.

"So I said the same thing to the KXIP management that we can have an overseas bowler in my place. But we didn't have an off-spinner as well. So I sort of played as an overseas off-spinner who could bat a little bit," Maxwell said.

"The management here at RCB has been outstanding. We've been working together on taking a fair bit of ownership and the off-field leadership staff is trying to help out as much as they can.

Unfortunately, runs just haven't come the way they should have when you are in really good form. I don't think I've had a better six months in cricket leading into this tournament. So it's frustrating when it ends up like this. But if I can get my body and my mind right, there's no reason I can't finish the tournament well if I do get another opportunity," Maxwell said.

Maxwell afforded a laugh when asked if he would have liked to put off his break by one more game. After all, Monday's encounter produced a record number of runs – SRH piled up 287 for three, and RCB responded with 262 for seven.

"I did notice during the PowerPlay that the pitch was not as slow and two-paced as it has been in the first few games. And I realised it was probably a bad game to miss; it would have been nice to be out there batting. But as I said, I wanted to give myself not just the physical break but also the mental break to give myself the right to play professional cricket. I take a lot of pride in my performance, and I put in a lot of hard work behind the scenes to get my body right for every game.

"And it has been a pretty tough struggle, given my body is on the wrong side of 30. I think that physical and mental toll probably just wore me down a little bit," Maxwell said.

THE GIST

- Maxwell has only scored 32 runs in six IPL games this season
- The Australian says he has not put a timeline on the duration of his break, but he will hope to get back to form in time for the T20 World Cup
- The hard-hitting batter went through a similar bad run of form in 2020 when he played for Kings XI Punjab
- Maxwell made just 108 runs in 11 innings — in a season best forgotten
- The 35-year-old adds that the physical and mental toll of a tough IPL 2024 wore him down

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K.L.E Society's Biotechnology Auditorium
B.V.B College of Engineering & Technology Campus, Vidyanagar.

Ballari
April 27, 2024
Basavarajeshwari Public School & College (BPSC)
Anantapur Road.

Davangere
April 28, 2024
Bapuji B School
Lakeview Campus, S S Layout, Shamanur Road.

Bengaluru
May 11, 2024
Sri Jagadguru Renukacharya College of Science, Arts and Commerce
9, Race Course Road, Ananda Rao Circle.

Mangaluru
May 11, 2024
Geetha S.M Shetty Hall
Ramakrishna College, Bunts Hostel Circle.

Mysuru
May 11, 2024
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P.B. No. 206, Gokulam III Stage.

Vijayapura
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B.L.D.E.A's V.P. Dr.P.G.Halakatti College of Engineering and Technology
Ashram Road, Adarsh Nagar.

Raichur
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INBRIEF

Water adalat to be held tomorrow

The BWSSB will hold water adalat on Thursday between 9.30 a.m. and 11 a.m. to address the grievances related to water billing, delay in providing water supply and sanitary connections, delay in converting from domestic connection to non-domestic connection, and other connected issues. It will be held at the following sub-divisions: North West 2: Behind Sriram Deluxe Hotel, near BMTC bus stop, Peenya 2nd Stage,; North West 4, Pipe Line Road, Sunkadakatte. Central 1-2: Nethaji Road, Frazer Town; North East 2: #55, 8th and 9th Cross, Central Street; North 1-2: No. 3, P and T Colony, R.T. Nagar, North 2-2: 3rd Block, BEL Layout, Vidyaranytapura; South 1-2: Kodichkkanahalli, GLR ground, Kodichikkanahalli; South 2-2: Central Jail Road, Koodlu; South West 2: Dwarakanath Road, V.V. Puram; opposite National College; South West 5: 1st Floor, Banagiri Nagar, near Water Tank, Banashankari 3rd Stage, 1st Main Road, East 1-3; Kadugodi STP, near White Field Railway Station, Somenahalli Post; and East 2-3: Banjara Layout, STP premises, Horamavu.

57th annual college day celebrations held

Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous hosted its 57th annual college day on April 13. Former Karnataka Lokayukta N. Santosh Hegde and Kannada film industry artist Karthik Jayaram were the chief guests. Mr. Hegde advised the students to evolve into better versions of themselves when they graduate and described how it was important for students to be honest, both socially and politically, not just in their conscience but also in their activities. Mr. Jayaram urged students to focus on academics and then follow their passion especially if it is the cinema industry.

Examination postponed

The PG examination of Bengaluru City University (BCU) scheduled to be held on April 17 has been postponed to April 29, in view of Lok Sabha election training, a release from BCU said.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated April 17, we have an interview with Archana Sinha, co-founder and CEO at Nourishing Schools Foundation. The NSF, which has implemented its programmes in more than 230 government schools across the country, impacting over 60,000 children, is now getting ready to roll out its toolkit for private schools, with Bengaluru as one of its focus cities.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (April 17, Wednesday), the following articles are available:

- Reforms needed in the voting process **bit.ly/votingevms**
- Three new fish species spotted using tools in the Laccadive Sea **bit.ly/fishspeciesnew**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Congress has not won an LS seat in city after 1999, but it is hopeful of turning the tide

Even when the party outdid BJP in Assembly polls thrice, it didn't win an LS seat here, indicating a schism in voters' preferences for State and Centre

CITY AND ELECTIONS

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

Congress has not won a Lok Sabha seat in Bengaluru city after 1999. the BJP has won all the Lok Sabha seats in the city since 2004 – two seats in 2004, and three since 2009 after delimitation of seats in 2008.

This has been the case even when Congress outdid the BJP in Assembly polls thrice – 2004, 2013 and 2018 – indicating a schism in voters' preferences in Bengaluru for the State and Centre.

A senior Congress leader from the city who has unsuccessfully contested Lok Sabha polls twice said the city has preferred BJP for Lok Sabha even when Congress found favour in the Assembly elections. "The best example was the 2004 polls. Both Assembly and parliamentary polls were held on the same day, in the same booth. While Congress won seven out of eight Assembly seats in Bengaluru South Lok Sabha constituency, BJP won the Lok Sabha seat. This essentially means the same voter voted for a Congress MLA and a BJP MP, not even a minute apart," he said.

Past elections: How parties fared

	BJP	Congress	JD(S)	Others
1999 Assembly (15 seats)	5	9	0	1
1999 Lok Sabha (2 seats)	1	1	0	0
2004 Assembly (15 seats)	5	10	0	0
2004 Lok Sabha (2 seats)	2	0	0	0
2008 Assembly (28 seats)	17	10	1	0
2009 Lok Sabha (3 seats)	3	0	0	0
2013 Assembly (28 seats)	12	13	3	0
2014 Lok Sabha (3 seats)	3	0	0	0
2018 Assembly (28 seats)	11	15	2	0
2019 Lok Sabha (3 seats)	3	0	0	0
2023 Assembly (28 seats)	16	12	0	0

South citadel

In fact, Bengaluru South was one of the first Lok Sabha seats to be won by the BJP in Karnataka in 1991 along with Mangalore (now Dakshina Kannada), Bidar and Tumakuru seats. Of them, the party has retained Bengaluru South and Dakshina Kannada seats since then.

"In 2009, when the United Progressive Alliance did very well in all urban centres across India, BJP won all three seats in Bengaluru. Even when we fielded an icon (Infosys cofounder Nandan Nilekani) in 2014, BJP won that seat. BJP has always fielded outsiders in Bengaluru North seat, and yet won it consistently since 2004," the Congress leader said.

A senior Congress minister from the city said that voters in Bengaluru had generally tilted right since the 1990s. The Congress had been able to break this only in Assembly polls due to a strong slate of candidates and anti-incumbency. "It is a fact that we do not have a strong slate of candidates for the Lok Sabha seats in Bengaluru. We have never had stable faces for each of these constituencies. We have changed candidates in almost every election," he said.

Bengaluru's senior BJP leader and Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R. Ashok claimed that the issue of national security, relatively less corruption during NDA government tenures in Delhi, and the development plank of the party has historically struck a chord with the city's voters. "Modi factor has also boosted BJP and held us steady in the city since 2014," he said.

When BJP was drubbed in the 2023 Assembly polls in Karnataka, the party increased its vote share by 5.4% compared to its performance in 2018. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had led roadshows, collectively adding up to 36 km, in Bengaluru in the run-up to the polls.

However, leaders of Congress, presently leading the government in Karnataka, said the elections this time could throw a surprise.

'Modi fatigue'

"Electoral patterns will always be broken some day, and new patterns emerge. We are confident that this time, there is a Narendra Modi fatigue and anti-incumbency against BJP MPs in the city. For instance, in the Bengaluru North seat, there are rumblings within the BJP. Our feedback is that we stand a chance to win two seats this time," said Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda whose Assembly constituency is in north Bengaluru.

Another senior Minister Ramalinga Reddy, whose daughter and former Jayanagar MLA Sowmya Reddy, is the party's candidate in Bengaluru South seat, said: "People seem to be catching up with the lies and maladministration of Narendra Modi."

YouTuber booked for trespass at KIA

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Kempegowda International Airport police on Monday booked a YouTuber for trespassing into restricted area to shoot a video to claim that he stayed in the airport for 24 hours hoodwinking security checks.

Based on a complaint by Murali Lal Meenam, in charge of airport security, the police have registered a case against Vikas Gowda, 23, charging him for public nuisance and trespass. Mr. Meena in his complaint said that Vikas checked in on April 7 to board a domestic flight to Chennai. After completing security checks, he ventured into other areas and recorded the video claiming that he stayed in the airport for 24 hours. This is not only a false claim but also casts aspersions on the security personnel and system, Mr. Meena said in the complaint.

KIA records highest-ever annual passenger traffic and cargo growth

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) said that the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru witnessed its highest-ever annual passenger traffic and cargo numbers during the financial year (FY) 2023-24.

BIAL, the operator of the airport, said a total of 37.53 million passengers traversed through KIA. Besides 439,524 metric tonnes of cargo passed through the airport.

The airport catered to 32.86 million domestic passengers and 4.67 million international passengers during this period.

KIA operates flights to 108 destinations, of which 80 are domestic and 28 are international routes.

The airport saw an increase in air traffic movements, with a total of 245,880 air traffic movements recorded during FY 2023-24. Domestic air traffic movements saw 10% growth while international growth stood at 13%, as compared to the previous financial year.

BIAL, the operator of the airport, said a total of 37.53 million passengers traversed through Kempegowda International Airport.

On April 29, 2023, the airport recorded the highest number of passengers for FY '24 at 116,688, marking the busiest day since the airport's opening in May 2008.

Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Pune were the busiest domestic destinations, while Dubai, Singapore, Doha, Bangkok, and Abu Dhabi were among the top choices of passengers flying overseas.

FY '24 also witnessed the launch of several new airlines and routes, including Air India Express, Alliance Air, and Fly91 on the domestic front, and Manta Air, Maldivian Airlines, and Thai Lion Air on the international front.

Internationally, new routes to Munich (Germany), Dhaalu (Maldives), Phuket (Thailand) and Denpasar (Indonesia) were introduced.

On the domestic front, the airport has expanded its routes to include Salem, Shivamogga, Aurangabad, Jharsuguda, Ayodhya, Hirasar Rajkot, Nanded and Sindhudurg.

According to BIAL, KIA's cargo recorded a total throughput of 439,524 metric tonnes in FY '24, reflecting a notable 7.1% increase from the preceding financial year. International tonnage reached 266,186 metric tonnes, exhibiting a 4% growth over the previous year, while domestic tonnage experienced a strong 13% rise, totaling 173,338 metric tonnes in comparison to the previous year.

In FY '24, KIA's cargo operated to 33 destinations, as compared to 25 destinations in FY '23. The top five destinations for exports include LEJ (Leipzig/Halle), CGN (Cologne Bonn), ORD (Chicago O'Hare), DXB (Dubai), and SIN (Singapore Changi).

CCB seizes marijuana worth ₹10 L, one arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Anti-Narcotics Wing of the Central Crime Branch on Tuesday arrested a 26-year-old swimming coach and recovered 5.5 kg of marijuana worth ₹10 lakh from him.

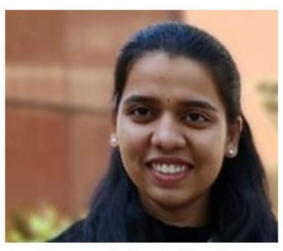
The accused, Rizwan Razaq, a native of Kerala working as swimming coach at a private club in Begur, has been residing in the city for the last eight years. According to the police, in order to make quick money he sourced narcotics from local peddlers and sold it to his contacts. Based on a tip-off, a team of CCB officials raided his place and booked him under NDPS Act, 1985.

In another case, the CK Acchukattu police arrested a Nigerian national and recovered 24 gm of cocaine worth ₹1.75 lakh. He was caught red-handed while waiting for his contacts at Katriguppe playground. The accused did not have valid travel documents and is suspected to have been sourcing the drugs from a neighbouring State, a police officer said.

28 candidates from Karnataka clear civil services exams of 2023

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

As many as 28 candidates from Karnataka managed to clear Civil Services (Mains) Examination-2023 and Soubhagya S. Beelagimath has emerged the State topper with 101 All India Rank (AIR). The Union Public Service Commission announced the 2023 results on Tuesday. A total of 1,016 candidates have been recommended for appointment by the UPSC.


Soubhagya S. Beelagimath has emerged as the State topper.

An agriculture science graduate, Ms. Soubhagya from Davangere studied at Agriculture University, Dharwad. She cleared CSE in her second attempt without going to coaching classes. Her father runs a plants nursery in Davangere, while her mother is a homemaker. "In the first attempt, I was not able to pass the preliminary exam. However, with more effort in the second attempt, I managed to get this rank. For this rank, I may get an IPS posting. But my dream is to become an IAS officer. At the same time, I have cleared the Indian Forest Service mains. I plan to take CSE again to improve my ranking," she said.

Nagendra Babu Kumar has got AIR 160. Senior IAS officer from the State's cadre Rakesh Singh's daughter Sanskriti Singh has secured an AIR of 366. Yashswini R., daughter of Pramila who is a section officer of Rural Development Department, has secured an AIR of 379. Visually challenged K.T. Meghna, already working as an Indian Information Service officer, has secured AIR of 721.

Police sub-inspector clears UPSC exam in Kannada

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Shantappa Kurubara, a police sub-inspector (PSI) of Srirampura police station in the city, wrote the Civil Service (Mains) Examination-2023 in Kannada, attended the interview in Kannada, and got an All India Rank of 644 in the CSE -2023. From failing II PU twice, Mr. Shantappa has come this far to achieve this feat.

A B.Sc graduate, Mr. Shantappa has achieved this rank in his eighth attempt. However, unsatisfied with this rank, he has decided to take the civil service exam next year as well. "I have succeeded in clearing the CSE exam in the eighth attempt. I am not satisfied with this rank. I will take the exam again next year. My dream is to become an IAS officer," he said.

Hailing from Ballari district, Mr. Shantappa lost his father early. "My uncle was working in Bengaluru as a migrant daily wage labourer and I joined him during school holidays. I went back to Ballari and completed school. I failed II PU twice but later completed my graduation and became a sub-inspector," he said, attributing his success to the insults he faced when he failed PU.

Shantappa Kurubara, PSI, Srirampura police station, in Bengaluru. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

While serving as a sub-inspector, Mr. Shantappa engaged in various social service activities. While posted at Annapoorneshwari Nagar police station, he taught children at a slum in the area and helped families with groceries during the pandemic. He also launched a social media campaign and installed a mobile toilet at Goraguntepalya junction.

Food delivery executive arrested for stealing bikes

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Byappanahalli police on Monday arrested a 23-year-old food delivery executive and recovered five stolen bikes worth ₹3 lakh from him. The accused Deepak is a resident of Jaraganahalli in JP Nagar 6th phase.

He would identify bikes during work at daytime and return in the night to steal them and sell it to his contacts at throwaway prices. The accused would convince the buyers offering them cheap deals and takes a small amount as advance with a promise to return with the documents with full and final settlement, a police officer said. Based on a bike theft case reported, the police identified the accused through CCTV footage and arrested him. The accused has 14 cases pending against him at various police stations across the city, the police said.

Hebbal flyover work: Traffic to be diverted for six months from today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Commuters traversing the bottleneck of Hebbal flyover will have to endure more traffic logjam for the next six months, starting Wednesday.

As Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has taken up work to add two new lanes to the congested flyover, the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) has banned all traffic except two-wheelers on the K.R. Puram ramp of the flyover. "As part of the work, two spans of the existing K.R. Puram up ramp needs to be dismantled at the junction where the ramp joins the main track," BTP said in a statement.

The BTP has now asked commuters from Nagavara (Outer Ring Road) going towards the city via Mehkri Circle to go to Hebbal circle below the flyover, take right towards Kodigehalli, and then take U-turn to join the service road and further join the loop towards city.

"Commuters coming from K.R. Puram towards the city are requested to use alternative routes such as IOC-Mukunda theatre road, Lingarajapuram flyover and Nagavara-Tannery road route to enter the city," the BTP said.

Commuters from Hegde Nagar-Thanisandra may use GKVK-Jakkur Road to enter the city. Commuters moving from K.R. Puram towards Yeshwantpur can move straight below Hebbal flyover towards BEL circle and take left turn at BEL circle to reach Sadashivanagar police station junction and take a right turn and move towards IISc and onwards to Yeshwantpur, the BTP said.

Commuters travelling towards KIA from K.R. Pura, Hennur, HRBR layout, Banasawadi, K.G. Halli, and surrounding areas are requested to use the Hennur-Bagalur Road to reach the airport, the BTP said.

Timings
BENGALURU

WEDNESDAY, APR. 17		
RISE	06:06	SET 18:32
RISE	13:32	SET 01:51
THURSDAY, APR. 18		
RISE	06:05	SET 18:33
RISE	14:21	SET 02:32
FRIDAY, APR. 19		
RISE	06:05	SET 18:33
RISE	15:08	SET 03:10

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	26
Mysuru	36	23
Bengaluru	35	22

Bengaluru Today
35°C A dry weather will prevail. Morning will be comfortable.The day will be warm and humid afternoon. Night will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C Rise in temperature. The weather will be dry. Day will be very warm and humid with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable.

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THE HINDU
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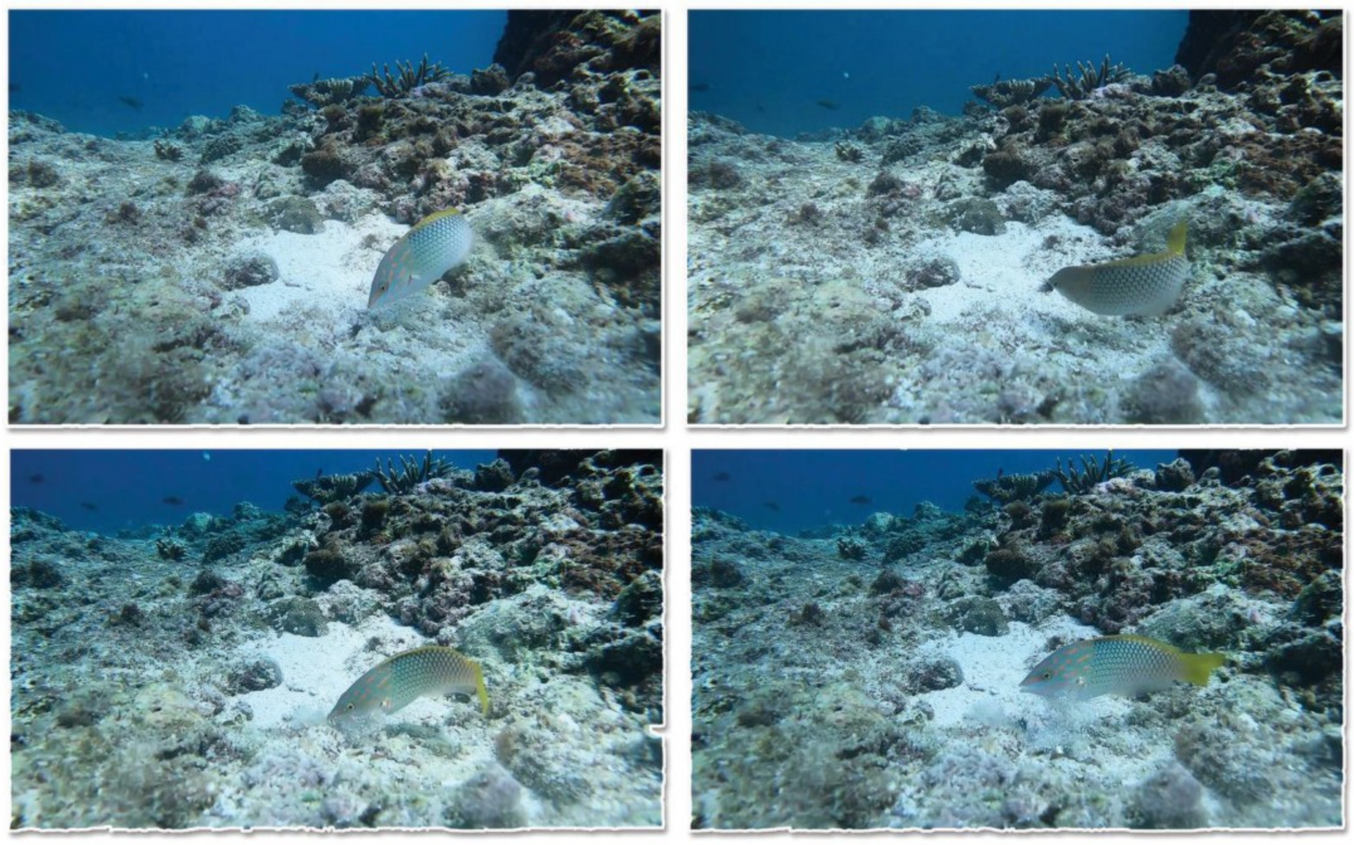
Three new fish species spotted using tools in the Laccadive Sea

Reports of animals like chimpanzees using straws to draw water and crows fashioning leaves to extract insects from crevices are well known whereas reports of aquatic animals using tools have been less common. This is partly because they are more difficult to observe and a perception that fish are 'less intelligent'

Siddhi Jaishankar
Rohan Arthur



(Clockwise from top left) A checkerboard wrasse at Kavaratti Island, Lakshadweep, using the reef platform as an anvil to break the sea urchin's test and prey on it. SIDDHI JAISHANKAR, ROHAN ARTHUR/SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

THE GIST

Three fish species in the Laccadive Sea have been found to be capable of using tools. They used live or dead coral structures as anvils to break the hard shells of sea urchins so they could get to the edible bits inside

Unlike primates, birds, otters, octopuses, and many other animals that scientists know are capable of wielding tools, fish have no hands, claws, or tentacles. Being able to grasp and manipulate objects are key requirements for using tools

As naturalists spend more time in the water, they are observing more tool-use in fish. Documenting them is critical so we can ask larger questions about habitat use by fish, the development of animal intelligence, and predator-prey interactions

Three fish species that live in the Laccadive Sea, off the southwest corner of the Indian coast, are capable of using tools, we recently found.

All three species used live or dead coral structures as anvils to break the hard shells of sea urchins so they could get to the edible bits inside. The Jansen's wrasse (*Thalassoma jansenii*) and the checkerboard wrasse (*Halichoeres hortulanus*) have never been reported using tools before, and this is the first documented instance of the moon wrasse *(Thalassoma lunare*) using tools in the wild.

Our study was published in the journal *Coral Reefs* in February. It adds to the growing number of reports of tool-use in animals. While the sophistication of human tool use, from flints to computers, distinguishes us from other animals, the use of tools itself is more common than scientists first imagined.

Reports of animals like chimpanzees using straws to draw water and crows fashioning leaves to extract insects from crevices are well known whereas reports of aquatic animals using tools have been far less common. This is partly because they are much more difficult to observe and because of the perception that species like fish are 'less intelligent'. So scientists have thought they are less likely to be capable of complex cognitive tasks.

Why do fish need tools?

As with many scientific discoveries, our observations were accidental. We were diving off the western coast of Kavaratti, Lakshadweep, to study the burrowing sea urchin (*Echinostrephus molaris*). These small urchins are an important agent of reef erosion. They dig deep burrows into the structure of a reef, weakening its overall framework. And they are abundant in Kavaratti.

We were interested in identifying if the urchin had any natural predators that could help regulate its population. To identify these predators, we placed multiple underwater cameras at different points in the reef to observe them undisturbed.

As we expected, few fish were able to prey on the urchin. *E. molaris* like most sea urchins is covered in an armour of spines. It also has a hard skeleton called a test that protects its internal organs, making it difficult for fish with unspecialised mouth parts to prey on it.

Yet in multiple instances, we found the Jansen's, checkerboard, and moon wrasses were using makeshift tools around them to break open urchin tests, like people might break open a walnut shell. The cameras recorded most of these scenes when we weren't actively watching them, although we were able to observe the last few in person.

How did the wrasses use tools?

Unlike primates, birds, otters, octopuses, and many other animals that scientists know are capable of wielding tools, fish have no hands, claws, or tentacles. This presents an obvious challenge for tool use, since being able to grasp and manipulate objects are key requirements for using tools.

Some fish have found innovative ways of using water itself as a tool. The archer fish, for example, spouts jets of water through its specialised mouth to shoot down prey above the surface. To achieve this, especially with moving prey, the fish needs to have a sense of the angle and force of the jet and maintain perfect timing.

The three wrasses in our study don't have specialised mouthparts like the archer fish. They make do instead with a series of specialised behaviours.

Eating a burrowing sea urchin presents two difficulties. The first is the pincushion of long, sharp spines that a fish has to navigate if it doesn't want to get a mouth full of venomous jabs. The second is the hard test itself. In instance after instance, we observed how the three species of wrasses tackled these challenges.

> While the sophistication of human tool use, from flints to computers, distinguishes us from other animals, the use of tools itself is more common than scientists first imagined

Upon finding an urchin, a wrasse would skilfully approach it from the side and use its snout to gingerly turn the urchin over with a series of pushes and jabs. The underside of the urchin has fewer and softer spines, allowing the wrasse to safely pick it up in its jaws. With the prize in its mouth, the wrasse would swim to a nearby hard coral and strike the urchin against it, dusting off the prickly spines. Even more strikes would break open the test as well.

Once the shell was cracked, the wrasse could eat the soft bits inside. In this task, the wrasses used the same coral reef as a tool to achieve two different purposes.

Why does the finding matter?

Scientists have previously observed anvil use in only about 18 fish species around the world, all belonging to the same family of wrasses, *Labridae*. The three wrasses in our story also belong to this family. Their prey includes invertebrates like crabs, clams, and urchins, and vertebrates like baby sea turtles. The fish's sizes, methods of approach, handling of prey, and geographical locations vary, however.

These commonalities and differences raise the question: why is such tool-use so (relatively) common only in the *Labridae* family of wrasses? As with primates, does this ability depend on brain size? Or is it simply the case that we don't have enough observations from other families of fish?

Our study raises but doesn't answer these questions. What it does, however, is reinforce the need for more rigorous observations of the natural world. As naturalists spend more time in the water, they are observing more tool-use in fish. Often these observations are incidental, yet documenting them carefully is critical so we can ask larger questions about habitat use by fish, the development of animal intelligence, and predator-prey interactions, among others.

(Rohan Arthur is a senior scientist working with the Oceans and Coasts Programme of the Nature Conservation Foundation. Siddhi Jaishankar is a research assistant at the same programme, working on coral reef erosion by sea urchins in Lakshadweep, and other projects involving seagrasses and dugongs in the Andaman Islands.)

BIG SHOT

Bleached and dead coral around Lizard Island on the Great Barrier Reef, located 270 km north of the city of Cairns. Australia's famed Great Barrier Reef is teetering on the brink, suffering one of the most severe coral bleaching events on record – and the fifth in eight years – leaving scientists unsure of its survival. AFP

QUESTION CORNER

Eclipses: from fleeting to frequent

Q: What are the frequencies of solar and lunar eclipses?

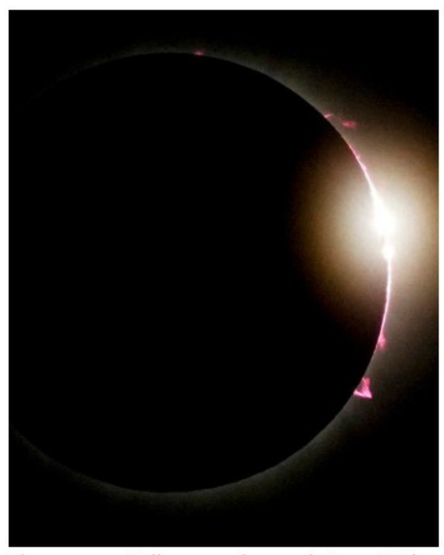
A: A solar eclipse, especially a total one, can be seen from only a limited part of the earth, while the eclipsed moon can be seen at the time of the eclipse wherever the moon is above the horizon.

In most calendar years there are two lunar eclipses; in some years one or three or none at all occur. Solar eclipses occur two to five times a year. Five is exceptional. There were five solar eclipses in 1935 and will be again in 2206.

The average number of total solar eclipses in a century is 66 for the earth as a whole, according to the New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Any point on the earth may, on the average, experience no more than one total solar eclipse in three to four centuries.

The situation is quite different for lunar eclipses. An observer remaining in the same place can see 19 or 20 lunar eclipses in 18 years. A total lunar eclipse can last as long as an hour and three-quarters, for a solar eclipse, the maximum duration of totality is only seven and a half minutes.

This difference results from the fact that the moon is much smaller in cross section than the extension of the earth's shadow but can be only a little greater in apparent size than the Sun.



The moon partially covers the sun during a total solar eclipse, as seen from Mazatlan, Mexico. AP

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Police raid central prison, recover cash and knives

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

To keep a tab on anti-social elements operating from within the prison, a team of the city police on Tuesday raided the central prison at Parappana Agrahara and seized ₹40,000 in cash and three knives from the inmates.

The raids were carried to keep a check on the habitual offenders and rowdy-sheeters operating from inside the prison in the wake of the elections, a senior police officer said.

The raids also checked contraband and banned items such as drugs and mobile phones, the police officer added.

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BEST OF EUROPE-9/13 DAYS
France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Vatican, Italy.
DEP DATES: 2024: June 7, 14, 28. Jul 5, 19. Aug 9, 23. Sep 13, 27. Oct 4, 18. Nov 8, 15.
SINGAPORE - MALAYSIA - THAILAND
4/5/7/8/11/15 DAYS
Universal Studios, Sea Aquarium, Sentosa Island, Garden By The Bay, Genting Highland, Batu Caves, Twin Tower,
Putrajaya City Tour, Coral Island, Pattaya Beach, Nong Nooch Village, Safari World, Dolphin & Sea Lion Show, Bangkok City Tour, Etc
Dep Dates 2024: May 10, 20, June 3, 10, 24. July 8, 22, Aug 5, 19, 26. Sep 9, 23, 30. Oct 7, 21. Nov 4, 18, 25 . Dec 2, 16.
EAST EUROPE - 11 DAYS
GERMANY: Munich, BMW Welt, Berlin, Dresden, CZECH REPUBLIC: Prague, Charles Bridge, AUSTRIA: Vienna, Schönbrunn Palace,
SLOVAKIA: Bratislava, HUNGRY: Budapest, Cruise On River Danube, CROATIA: Zagreb, SLOVENIA: Ljubljana, ZELL AM SEE.
DEP DATES: 2024 : June 10, 24. July 1, 15. Aug 5, 19. Sep 9, 23, 30. Oct 14, 28. Nov 11.
NEPAL-MUKTHINATH - 5/9 DAYS
Lumbini, Kathmandu, Bhakthapur, Doleshwar Mahadev, Pokhara, Jomsom, Phewa Lake, Mukthinath Darshan, Manokamana Cable Car.
Dep Dates 2024: May 9, 17, 22. Jun 5, 19. July 10, 24. Aug 7, 21. Sep 11, 25. Oct 16, 30. Nov 13, 27.
BHUTAN - 8 DAYS
Thimphu City, Phuentsholing, Paro Dzong, Punakha Dzong, Taktsang
Dep Dates 2024: May 8, 22. Jun 5, 19. July 10, 24. Aug 7, 21. Sep 11, 25. Oct 16, 30. Nov 13, 27. Dec 4, 18.
CAMBODIA - VIETNAM 6/7/12 DAYS
CAMBODIA: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Thousand Lingas River, Tonle Sap, Angkor Wat World Largest Hindu Temple
VIETNAM: Hanoi, Ninh Binh, Tam coc, Halong Bay, Ho Chi Minh City, Cu Chi Tunnels, Mekong Delta
Dep Date 2024: May 6, 20, 27. Jun 10, 24. July 8, 22. Aug 5, 19, 26. Sep 9, 23, 30. Oct 7, 21. Nov 4, 18, 25. Dec 2, 16.
BALI - 5/7 DAYS
Denpasar, Nusa Penida Island, Kintamani, Ubud, Garuda Wisnu Cultural Park, Tanah Lot, Beraton Lake, Ulun Danu, Taman Ayun, Tanjung Benoa Beach.
Dep. Date : 2024: MAY 9, 20. JUN 10, 24. July 8, 22. Aug 12, 26. Sep 9, 23. Oct 7, 21. Nov 11, 25. Dec 2, 16.
UNITED KINGDOM-10 DAYS
London, England, Scotland, Oxford, Wales, Ireland, Manchester, Lake Windermere, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Belfast, Dublin
Dep Date 2024: June 3, 17, 24. July 8, 29. Aug 12. Sep 2, 16, 30. Oct 7, 21. Nov 4
SCANDINAVIA-10 DAYS
Finland, Helsinki, Sweden, Stockholm, Norway, Nutshell, Oslo, Denmark, Copenhagen
Dep Date 2024: June 13, 27. July 12, 26. Aug 8, 22 Sep 5, 19.
AZERBAIJAN - 7 DAYS
Baku, Ateshgah, Gabala, Cable Car, Qobustan.
Dep Date 2024: May 6, 20, 27. June 10, 24. July 8, 22. Aug 5, 19, 26. Sep 9, 23, 30. Oct 7, 21. Nov 4, 18, 25. Dec 2, 16
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Any dog can become ferocious; need guidelines to make pet owners responsible, says HC

'It is for dog owners to ensure their pets do not harm other citizens/living beings in the vicinity'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Observing that "any dog can become ferocious", the High Court of Karnataka told the Central government that it is necessary to issue certain guidelines for "responsible pet ownership" through rules framed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

"It is not only those dogs which are branded ferocious that can indulge in inflicting harm upon human beings or animals in the surrounding. Any dog can become ferocious. A dog bite is a dog bite, be it from a branded ferocious dog or any other dog. An appropriately constituted committee should delve upon the concept of responsible pet ownership to be protected, and irresponsible pet ownership to be penalised," the court observed.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna made the suggestions in his recent order quashing a circular imposing ban on 23 ferocious and dangerous dog breeds by the Centre through in the absence of such power available in the law to impose blank ban on dog breeds.

"It is not that a Pitbull or American bulldog or any other pet dog is a dog that is roaming in the streets. It is a dog owned by pet owners. Pet owners would become solely responsible for the act of their dogs, if they are ferocious or dangerous, as pet owners have kept them despite their characteristic being projected... they should act responsibly," the court observed.

Responsible pet ownership, the court said must emerge as a *sine qua non* to pet ownership, as it is in public domain that dogs are more likely to become aggressive when they are unsupervised, unnurtured, and not socially conditioned to live closely with human beings and other dogs/animals

The court also pointed out that a blanket psychological thought process of this kind cannot and will not lead to any solution to the problem.

It is for the dog owners to act responsibly that their pets would not harm any other citizen/other living beings in the vicinity or anywhere.

To bring in laws

These are the factors that will have to be deliberated upon by the Central government while bringing in any law to ban certain breeds, the court said, while pointing out that dog ban is not alien to any country in the globe, but such actions, be it breed specific ban or breed specific restrictions, were taken through promulgation of legislations in countries like Canada, Austria, Ireland, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Spain, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and USA.

Housebreaking theft: Two persons held

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Ramamurthy Nagar police on Tuesday arrested a rowdy-sheeter and his associates involved in four house-break thefts reported in eastern parts of the city. The police recovered valuables worth ₹15 lakh from them.

Srinivasa, the rowdy sheeter in Yeshwantpur, has over 20 criminal cases pending against him. Based on a house-break theft in Ramamurthy Nagar on March 23, the police found a fingerprint from the scene of crime which matched with that of Venkatesh, an associate of Srinivasa and a habitual offender. Venkatesh had visited Parappana Agrahara prison a month ago to meet Srinivas and had submitted his biometrics details there. The accused had hatched a plan to carry out a series of house breaks and Venkatesh was assigned to recce the area. After Srinivas came out on bail a month ago, the duo executed the plan, a police officer said. With their arrest, the police solved four house-break thefts reported in KR Puram and RM Murthy Nagar.

City Police Commissioner B. Dayananda advised people to take precautions while going out of town. "People should avoid using padlocks on gates. They should alert the neighbours or the jurisdictional police stations," he said.

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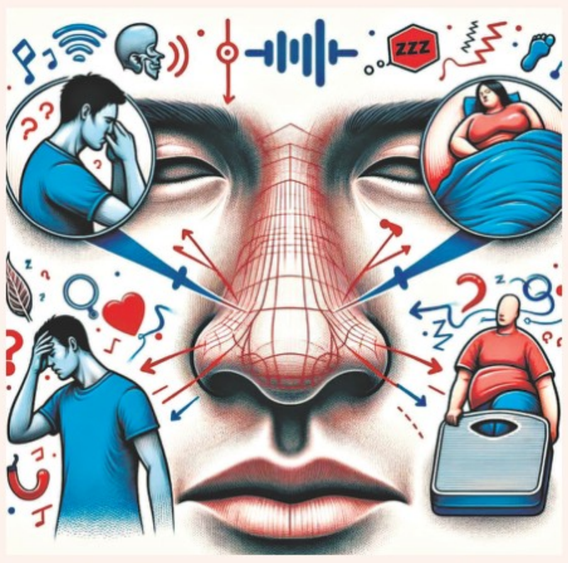
The Surprising Link Between Nasal Obstruction and Weight Gain: What You Need to Know



Do you ever feel nasal congestion and blockages on a daily basis? Most of this will generally fall under the heading of just plain bothersome, but recent research is indicating something else—something that might well mean a large difference in your life: weight gain. It's important that one learns the linkage.

In most of the people, it causes some type of nasal obstruction, such as allergy, sinusitis, or structural deformity, like the deviation of the septum, that can be very distressing and lead to difficulty in breathing through the nose, thus making people prone to mouth breathing, especially during sleep. The moving in of the breath not only disrupts the quality of sleep but can make metabolic processes unstable, which may enhance the chances of putting on a few kilograms over the years.

So, how does the nasal obstruction make people gain weight? The key lies in the body's response to the challenged nasal breathing pattern. Thus, the body tends to shift towards the mouth for breathing.

Mouth breathing could then lead to more resistance of the airway secondary to the tongue fall back, dehydration, dehumification of the air inhaled and hence lesser oxygen absorption in the course of sleep.

The disruption of this breath could also lead to malfunctioning hormones, especially cortisol and insulin, respectively handling metabolism and appetite. Various studies have shown that if one gets less sleep, there may be a disturbance in the balance of these hormones due to the blockage of the nose, leading to metabolic dysfunction, causing an increase in the appetite for food, especially high-calorie carbohydrate-rich food.

What's more, consistent insomnia also results in low amounts of leptin—a hormone produced by fat cells that signal when the body has had enough food—and high levels of ghrelin, a hormone that stimulates eating.

Fortunately, there are **steps you can take to address nasal obstruction and mitigate its effects on weight gain:**

1. Consult an ENT Surgeon: Hence, it is advised to consult a specialized ENT surgeon for a clear diagnosis of the underlying cause for your nasal block and further treatment. ENT Surgeons are looking at the nose structure, particularly from a point of view that seeks to answer whether any structural problem like a deviated septum or nasal polyps are present, which might require surgery.

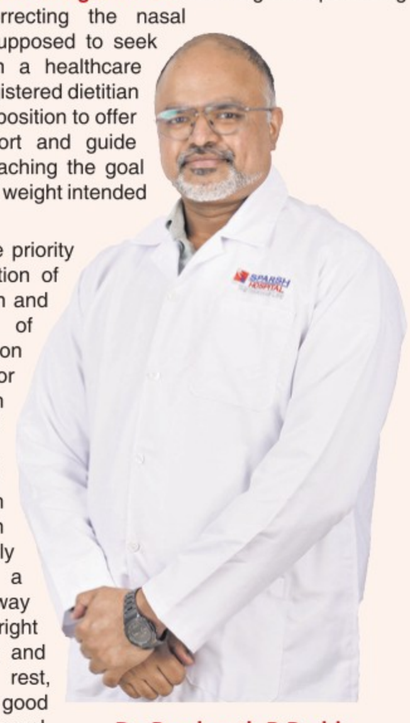
2. Seek Treatment: Once the cause of nasal obstruction is identified, your ENT surgeon is able to recommend the appropriate treatment. Some of the treatments you may receive include allergies treatment, medicines to reduce swelling in the sinuses, and/or intranasal steroids sprays or surgeries that would correct the structural abnormality and improve the air flow inside the nose.

3. Stay Healthy: Have a balanced diet together with daily exercises. The implication of this is that a balanced diet is required by an ordinary person on a daily basis to boost their general health of the body, apart from those who are under medications. Avoid processed foods and ensure meals are full of nutrients; this can regulate the appetite and avoid gaining weight.

4. Sleep Hygiene: Regularity of time when to sleep and creating a good environment for sleep might increase the quality of sleep despite nasal obstruction.

Use of saline sprays in combination with humidifiers helps to reduce congestion, hence opening pathways for better breathing while sleeping. Sleeping in an inclined position(by inclining the cot or the matress) does help improve the blood circulation and hence reduce the venous congestion of the nasal airway and improve the nasal breathing.

5. Seek Support for Weight Loss: If the weight keeps adding up without correcting the nasal block, one is supposed to seek assistance from a healthcare provider or a registered dietitian who will be in a position to offer individual support and guide them toward reaching the goal of the amount of weight intended to be lost.



You should give priority to the consultation of an ENT surgeon and management of nasal obstruction because, for good health and weight management, protection to the health of a person can effectively be made in a preventive way through the right nasal breathing and taking good rest, required by good health in general. This is even important for carrying out good health. This also is the key to the management of the symptoms of the nose toward attaining good health.

Dr. Prashanth R Reddy
ENT, Endoscopic Sinus and Skull Base Surgeon,
M.B.B.S & M.S. (E.N.T)
from Bangalore Medical College,
SPARSH Hospital, Infantry Road
SS SPARSH Hospital, RR Nagar

For Appointment Call: 080 61222000

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The increase in petrol consumption in the month of April

7 in percentage. Petrol sales of three state-owned firms, controlling 90% of the fuel market, rose to 1.22 million tonnes in between April 1 and 15, compared with 1.14 million tonnes in the year-earlier period. PTI

India's projected unemployment by 2028 as per the ORF

3.68 in percentage. India's unemployment rate is likely to decline from 4.47% as the economy hits the $5 trillion mark, fuelling a rise in employment, as per Observer Research Foundation (ORF). PTI

The dip in sugar output till April 15 of 2023-24 season

31.09 million tonnes. India's sugar production remained slightly lower on lower output from Karnataka, according to Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) data. PTI

The estimated deaths due to breast cancer by 2040

1 million. Breast cancer is now the world's most common carcinogenic disease, according to a new *Lancet* Commission on breast cancer. Around 7.8 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer in the last five years until 2020. PTI

The growth of China's economy in the first quarter of 2024

5.3 in percentage. China's economy in the first quarter beat expectations while receiving a boost from policies and an increase in demand. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Reforms needed in the voting process

When were Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) first introduced? What have been the concerns raised by activists about EVMs? What are the voting practices in other countries? How can the process of voting be made more robust?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan. R

The story so far:
The Supreme Court has decided to hear petitions seeking 100% cross-verification of the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips with the vote count as per Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

What is the history of voting process?
In the first two general elections of 1952 and 1957, a separate box was placed for each candidate with their election symbol. Voters had to drop a blank ballot paper into the box of the candidate whom they wanted to vote for. Thereafter from the third election, the ballot paper with names of candidate and their symbols was introduced with voters putting a stamp on the candidate of their choice.

The EVM was introduced on a trial basis in 1982 in the Assembly constituency of Paravur in Kerala. They were deployed in all booths during the Assembly elections of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry and West Bengal in 2001. The Supreme Court in various judgments has upheld the validity of using EVMs in elections. In the 2004 general elections to the Lok Sabha, EVMs were used in all 543 constituencies. In *Subramanian Swamy versus Election Commission of India* (2013), the Supreme Court ruled that a paper trail is an indispensable requirement for free and fair elections. The 2019 elections had EVMs backed with 100% VVPAT in all constituencies.

What are international practices?
Many western democracies continue to have paper ballots for their elections. Countries like England, France, The Netherlands and the U.S. have discontinued the use of EVMs, for national or federal elections, after trials in the last two decades. In Germany, the Supreme Court of the country declared the use of EVMs in elections as unconstitutional in 2009. Some countries like Brazil, however, use EVMs for their elections. Among our neighbours, Pakistan does not use EVMs. Bangladesh experimented in a few constituencies in 2018 but reverted to paper ballots for the general elections in 2024.

Ensuring transparency: An official marks an EVM at a distribution centre in Coimbatore on April 11. AFP

What are the features of EVMs?
EVMs bring significant benefits to the electoral process. First, the EVM has virtually eradicated booth capturing by limiting the rate of vote casting to four votes a minute and thus significantly increasing the time required for stuffing false votes. Second, invalid votes that were a bane of paper ballots and also a bone of contention during counting process have been eliminated through EVMs. Third, considering the size of our electorate which is close to one billion, the use of EVMs is eco-friendly as it reduces the consumption of paper. Finally, it provides administrative convenience for the polling officers on the day of the poll and has made the counting process faster and error-free. There are mechanisms to uphold the integrity of EVM and VVPAT process. These include random allocation of EVMs to booths before polls; conduct of a mock poll to display the correctness of EVMs and VVPAT before commencement of the actual poll; and the serial number of EVMs along with total votes polled shared with agents of candidates to verify the same at the time of counting of votes.

Despite its advantages, there have been doubts raised about the functioning of EVMs by various political parties and civil society activists from time to time. The most repeated allegation is that EVMs are susceptible to hacking as it is an electronic device. The ECI has time and again clarified that it is a standalone device like a calculator with no connectivity to any external device and hence free from any kind of external hack. The sample size for matching of the EVM count with VVPAT slips at present is five per assembly constituency/segment. This is not based on any scientific criteria and may fail to detect defective EVMs during counting. The present process also allows for booth-wise polling behaviour to be identified by various parties that can result in profiling and intimidation.

What can be the way forward?
In a transparent democracy, each citizen must be able to comprehend and verify the steps in the election process without any special technical knowledge. The 100% use of VVPAT has enabled the voters to verify that their votes are 'recorded as cast'. However, few additional steps need to be adopted to make the entire process more robust and ensure that the votes are 'counted as recorded'. 100% match of EVM count with VVPAT slips would be unscientific and cumbersome. The sample for matching of EVM count and VVPAT slips should be decided in a scientific manner by dividing each State into large regions as suggested by experts. In case of even a single error, the VVPAT slips should be counted fully for the concerned region and form the basis for results. This would instil a statistically significant confidence in the counting process. Further, in order to provide a degree of cover for voters at the booth level, 'totaliser' machines can be introduced that would aggregate votes in 15-20 EVMs before revealing the candidate-wise count.

Rangarajan. R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. He trains civil-service aspirants at 'Officers IAS Academy'. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

- The EVM was introduced on a trial basis in 1982 in the Assembly constituency of Paravur in Kerala.
- Despite its advantages, there have been doubts raised about the functioning of EVMs by various political parties and civil society activists from time to time. The most repeated allegation is that EVMs are susceptible to hacking as it is an electronic device.
- In a transparent democracy, each citizen must be able to comprehend and verify the steps in the election process without any special technical knowledge.

Why has India allowed FIIs to invest in its green bonds?

What are Sovereign Green Bonds? How will investments by Foreign Institutional Investors in green government securities accelerate India's transition to a green economy?

Kunal Shankar

The story so far:
On April 5 the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) green lighted investments in the country's Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs) by Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIS) – investors such as insurance companies, pension funds and nation-states' sovereign wealth funds. SGrBs are a kind of government debt that specifically funds projects attempting to accelerate India's transition to a low carbon economy.

How does it help in green transition?
Allowing FIIs to invest in India's green projects widens the pool of capital available to fund the country's ambitious 2070 net zero goals, ensuring 50% of India's energy comes from non-fossil fuel based sources and to reduce the carbon intensity of the nation's economy by 45%, as pledged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP26 in Glasgow 2021.

The RBI had issued SGrBs worth ₹16,000 crore in two tranches in January and February last year with maturities in 2028 and 2033. While in both instances the bonds were oversubscribed, the main participants were domestic financial institutions and banks, narrowing the avenues from where the government could borrow. Moreover, these green Government-Securities (G-Secs) were classified under the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR), a liquidity rate fixed by the RBI that financial institutions must maintain with themselves before they lend to their customers.

SGrBs yield lower interest than conventional G-Secs, and the amount foregone by a bank by investing in them is called a greenium. But central banks and governments the world over are encouraging financial institutions to embrace greeniums to hasten the transition to a greener future. Climate finance experts believe India would gain from allowing FIIs in green G-Secs. They say FIIs are also looking to diversify their pool of green investments, as there is considerable regulatory support particularly in developed countries. And so this is an opportunity for them to invest in India's green g-secs. Ashim Roy, Energy Finance lead at World Resources Institute, India said FIIs might also be looking to gain green credentials when such investments may not be available in their home markets, and because India has successfully addressed greenwashing fears with the Sovereign Green Bonds Framework in late 2022.

What is the green taxonomy gap?
In the 2022-23 Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the government's decision to issue SGrBs to accelerate funding government projects such as harnessing offshore wind, grid-scale solar power production, or encouraging the transition to battery operated Electric Vehicles (EVs). But the RBI had not created a green taxonomy, or a way to assess an investment's environmental, or emissions credentials to ensure the project is not an attempt at greenwashing, that is, faking green credentials to secure funding.

To address this gap, the Finance Ministry released India's first SGrB Framework on November 9, 2022 detailing the kind of projects that would receive funding through this class of G-Secs. These included "investments in solar/wind/biomass/hydropower energy projects (under 25 MW) that integrate energy generation and storage; supporting public lighting improvements (e.g. replacement with LEDs); supporting construction of new low-carbon buildings as well as energy-efficiency retrofits to existing buildings; projects to reduce electricity grid losses." The list goes on to include promoting public transport, subsidies to adopt EVs and building charging infrastructure. The government also sought Norway-based validator Cicero's opinion comparing India's SGrB Framework with International Capital Market Association's (ICMA's) green principles. Cicero rated India's framework as "green medium" with a score of "good governance". WRI's Ashim Roy said, "it would be crucial to identify new green projects with credible audit trails and high impact to optimally deploy the proceeds, especially ones that has received limited private capital like Distributed Renewable Energy and clean energy transition finance for MSMEs."

THE GIST

- Allowing FIIs to invest in India's green projects widens the pool of capital available to fund the country's ambitious 2070 net zero goals.
- In the 2022-23 Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the government's decision to issue SGrBs to accelerate funding government projects such as harnessing offshore wind, grid-scale solar power production, or encouraging the transition to battery operated Electric Vehicles.
- The RBI had issued SGrBs worth ₹16,000 crore in two tranches in January and February last year with maturities in 2028 and 2033.

Advocates exempted from wearing black coat till May 31

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Tuesday exempted the advocates practising in the district and taluk courts in the State from wearing black coats during the proceedings in these courts from April 18 to May 31 in view of the sweltering summer across the State.

A resolution was passed in the full court meeting of the High Court held on Tuesday.

The advocates can wear plain white-shirt/ white-salwar-kameez of any sober colour/ saree of any sober colour with plain white neck bands instead of regular prescribed dress during this period. While all the court halls in the Principal Bench of the High Court at Bengaluru and the two Benches at Dharwad and Kalaburagi have AC facility, the court halls in the district and talk courts have no such facility.

BWSSB to use Japanese tech to treat chemical wastewater in Peenya Industrial Area

Plans afoot to install a state-of-the-art mobile effluent treatment plant in the area

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a step towards making Peenya Industrial Area more eco-friendly, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) announced plans to introduce advanced Japanese technology to treat chemical wastewater produced in the area.

BWSSB chairman V. Ram Prasath Manohar visited Peenya Industrial Area with a representative from a Japanese technology firm to assess the current production of chemical wastewater and its impact on the environment on Tuesday.

Peenya Industrial Area, recognised as the largest industrial area in Asia, houses numerous industries that generate significant amounts of chemical wastewater. While some larger companies have their own effluent treatment plants (ETPs), a substantial number of small and micro-industries lack access to proper treatment systems. Consequently, untreated wastewater often pollutes local water bodies and groundwater.

Peenya Industrial Area, recognised as the largest industrial area in Asia, houses numerous industries that generate significant amounts of chemical wastewater. FILE PHOTO

To address these challenges, BWSSB plans to install a state-of-the-art mobile ETP in the industrial area. This innovative technology, sourced from Japan, will treat chemical wastewater at the industries' doorstep, enabling them to reuse the treated water. This initiative is expected to reduce water costs and enhance production efficiency for the industries, ultimately lowering product prices for customers, according to BWSSB.

"By adopting the advanced technology, we aim to transform Peenya Industrial Area into the world's leading eco-friendly industrial zone," said Mr. Manohar. "This initiative will help in preventing water pollution and promote sustainable industrial practices." A technology exhibition is scheduled for April 23 to showcase the mobile ETP and its potential impact on the area, he added.

Namma Yatri introduces cab services on commission-free model in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Namma Yatri's cabs will offer services such as non-AC mini, AC mini, sedan, and XL cab. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Namma Yatri, the open-mobility app for autorickshaws, introduced cab services in Bengaluru on Tuesday. The app is powered by ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) network and employs a commission-free approach by charging drivers a subscription fee rather than taking a percentage of revenue from rides.

According to a release by Namma Yatri, this strategic shift not only enhances driver income but also fosters improved vehicle maintenance and elevated customer experiences. "Namma Yatri proudly operates within the ONDC network, offering 100% open data and open-source code. Additionally, Namma Yatri takes the lead as the first app to embrace the latest pricing guidelines set forth by the State government," it said.

Namma Yatri's cabs will offer services such as non-AC mini, AC mini, sedan, and XL cab. "Non-AC mini cab, a unique addition, addresses frequent misunderstandings between drivers and customers regarding AC usage. It sets clear service expectations and competitive pricing for budget-conscious customers while promoting eco-friendly rides. The app will soon introduce inter-city, rentals, scheduled rides, and open up across Karnataka. It will also accommodate special requests like disability-friendly rides, extra luggage, traveling with pets, and trips to public transport hubs," the release stated.

Namma Yatri now has 25,000 cab drivers and the company said that it aims to onboard over 1 lakh drivers in the next six months.

Police arrest five persons minutes before they carry out 'supari' killing

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The alert Chikkajala police caught a gang of five people minutes before they were to execute 'supari' killing of a private firm employee at Gangtiganahalli on Monday night.

Sub-inspector Shivanna and staff attached to Chikkajala police station intercepted three people wearing monkey caps waiting in an SUV in an isolated area. The three are high school dropouts and juveniles. The police recovered lethal weapons. On inquiry, the accused revealed they were waiting for Kishore, a resident of Harohalli, to kill him. The juveniles confessed to being promised ₹3 lakh by Hemanth Reddy, 21, to eliminate Kishore and were paid ₹5,000 advance. The accused were waiting for Kishore, who was returning home from Mysuru on a scooter.

Hemanth Reddy, now arrested, told the police that his aunt and Kishore were colleagues and the latter was harassing her over phone. Enraged, he decided to eliminate Kishore and roped in the accused.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my client is intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned below from his owner namely **Smt.LAVEENA KOTRESH KUDARIMOTI,** Aged about 45 years, Wife of late Sri.M.Devaraj, **Kumari.ISHNA HEMANT SAVADATTI,** Aged about 19 years, Daughter of late Sri.D.Sunil Kumar, Both are residing at No.A 203, Sindhya sunshine Apartments, MRCR Layout, Near Toll Gate, Magadi Main Road, Basaveshwaranagar, Bangalore-560 079. Any person/s claiming any manner of right, title or interest in or over the schedule property is/are called upon to lodge such claim/s or objection/s with the undersigned in writing with supporting documents within **7 (Seven) days** from the date of this publication. If no such claim/s or objection/s is/are not received within the said period, then my client will proceed to purchase the schedule property and the claim/s received after the said period will not be considered.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of immovable property bearing **Plot No.403,** Khatha No.221 in the layout formed in the converted land in bearing survey No.63, situated in **Yelenahalli Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk,** presently under the Administrative Jurisdiction of BBMP, having BBMP Khata No.1239/221/403, measuring East to West 72 feet and North to South 50 feet and the same is bounded on the;

East by : Private property, West by : Road, North by : Property No.402, South by : Property No.404

D.HARDEEP
Advocate & Property Consultant,
No.10, 2nd Cross, 3rd Main, Vinayaka Nagar,
Banashankari 1st Stage, Bangalore-560 050,
Ph : 7795562207.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our Clients intend to purchase immovable property being MUDA Residential Site No. 11772, situated at 4th Stage, 2nd Phase, Vijayanagar, Devaraja Mohalla, Mysuru-570017, Measuring East to West 12.00 Meters and North to South 18.00 Meters, more fully described in the Schedule hereto and referred to as Schedule Property.

The present owners **Mrs. ANITHA GUJJARI PILLA,** W/o Sathyanarayana Pilla, represents to our clients that she is the lawful owner of the Schedule Property, having acquired title to the same by sale from its erstwhile owners **Mr. S Santosh.**

This is to inform the general public that any person/s or body having any claim whatsoever if any, in respect of the Schedule Property may file their written objections /claims by Registered Post AD, at our address given below, ***within 21 days*** of the publication of this notice, giving full particulars of the claim along with documents, failing which it would be deemed that there is no such claim/ dispute/ objections and our clients would thereafter not entertain any such claim.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY
(FULL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY)

Mysuru Urban Development Authority **(MUDA) Site No. 11772, Situated at 4th Stage, 2nd Phase, Vijanagar Devaraja Mohalla, Mysuru-570017** and bounded by:

East: Property No. 11771,
West: Property No. 11773,
North: Property No. 11758,
South: Road.

Measuring East to West 12.00 and North to South 18.00 Meters.

Sd/-
Keertikumar D. Naik, Advocate,
KKDN LAW FIRM
Unit I. 4-02, Sky, Walk, Assaye Road,
Ulsoor, Bengaluru-560042.
Bengaluru Date: 16.04.2024

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder

Call our toll-free number
1800 102 1878
Or write to us at
customercare@thehindu.co.in

Scan the QR code to register your feedback

THE HINDU businessline. FRONTLINE SPORTSTAR THE HINDU Young World THE HINDU

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE NO: GEM/2024/B/4853437 AND GEM/2024/B/4846416 DT:10.04.2024

Divisional Railway Manager/Electrical/Salem Division, Salem-5 for and on behalf of the President of India Invites E-Tender for the under mentioned works. Online bids only will be accepted. For detailed NIT, qualification criteria, bidding document, tender submission etc. can be viewed/downloaded from website portal **www.gem.gov.in.**

E-Tender Notice No, Date and Name of Work	Details
GEM/2024/B/4853437 dt:10.04.2024 Goods Transport Service - Per KM Based Service - Machinery & Equipment; Open Body LCV Truck; as per railway requirement	Approx. cost ₹ 22,64,400/- EMD - ₹ 45,288/- Completion Period - 24 Months
GEM/2024/B/4846416 dt: 10.04.2024 Monthly Basis Cab & Taxi Hiring Services - MUV; 2600 Km x312 Hrs; Outstation 24*7	Approx. cost ₹ 14,47,200/- EMD - ₹ 28,944/- Completion Period-24 Months
For all the works Closing Time & Date	16.00hrs. on 25.04.2024
For all the works Bids Opening Time & Date	16.30hrs. on 25.04.2024

All Addendum/ Corrigendum, Time extension, Clarifications, etc. will be uploaded in the website portal www.gem.gov.in. only and will not be published separately in Newspapers. Bidders should regularly visit website to keep themselves updated.

Follow us on: twitter.com/GMSRailway

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is issued on behalf of My client **Smt.G.Kala w/o Late.N.Guru** to bring the notice of the general public that registered page Nos.6 & 7 of original absolute sale deed bearing doc No.52172/2003-04 of Book-1, Stored in CD No.175, Date.22.03.2004, registered in the office of the sub-registrar Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore, executed by **Smt.Pillamma & her son Sri.Srinivas.H** rep by their GPA holder **Smt.Bhagyamma** in favour of **Sri.N.Guru s/o Late K.S.Narasimha Rao** is missing / lost/ misplaced in respect of schedule property.

If any person/s, firm, company, institution or organization has any claim are holding the afore mentioned document or schedule property, they may contact the undersigned in writing within **7 days** from the date of this notice failing which it will be presumed that there are no claims.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece and parcel of the residential immovable property bearing **site No.7** in property No.113/2, situated at **Laggere Village, Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk,** presently comes under the Limits of BBMP, Bangalore, measuring East to West 40 feet and North to South 20 feet, total measuring **800 Sq.ft.**, together with House thereon and bounded by:

East by : Property of Ramanna
West by : 30-0 feet Road,
North by : Property of Gangahanumaiaha
South by : Property of M.H.Jayanna

H. Prahlada, Advocate & Solicitor,
For H.P.Law, #2, 3rd Floor, Venkateshwara Complex, Yeshwanthpur, Bangalore-560022
M : 7760061073

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the public that my clients **Wasim Javid Shariff, Raziya Javid Shariff & Arif Javid Shariff** are intending to purchase the immovable property bearing Site No. 34/5, Assessment No.110/3, Khatha No. 110, situated at Laggere Village, Yashwanthpur Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, measuring East to West 20 Ft. and North to South 60 Ft., totally measuring 1200 Sq. Ft. from its owner Smt. B. Suma respectively.

If anybody or any authority having any right, title, claims, interest or objections over the same, may file their objections with documents to below mentioned address **within 15 days** from the date of this public notice. Failing which my client will proceed to purchase the above said Property by treating no one has objections in respect of the said properties.

Subrahmanya Hegde
Advocate
ANANDA & HEGDE
LAW ASSOCIATES
#76-77, Krishna Krupa Building
Ground Floor, 2nd Main Road
Sheshadripuram, Bangalore-20.
Mob: 9060069259.
Date: 16.04.2024
Place: Bangalore

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the General Public that my Client has entered in to an Agreement of Sale for purchase of Residential BDA Site/property more fully described in the Schedule hereunder from **SMT. BHAGERATHI Alias BHAGERATHAMMA,** Aged about 75 years, W/o Sri. B.C.Shivashankar, residing at No.24, 1st Main, Samrat Layout, Arakere, Hulimavu, Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru-560 076.

If any person/s has/have any right, title, interest or claim on the below mentioned Schedule Property, they may file their objections with the undersigned along with documentary proof **WITHIN 10 (TEN) DAYS** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which my Client will proceed to complete the sale transaction as the same is free from all encumbrances/claims. Any objections received thereafter shall not be entertained/ considered.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Property being BDA Site bearing **No.2239** (Two thousand two hundred thirty nine), in the layout formed by Bangalore Development Authority, Situated at **8th Block, Further Extension of Sir M.Vishweswaraiahnagar Layout, Bangalore,** measuring East to West: **18.00 meters,** North to South: **12.00 meters**, in all measuring **216.00 Square Meters,** presently bearing Property ID No. **43122081279**, and bounded on:

East by : Road
West by : Site Nos. 2234 and 2235
North by : Site No.2238
South by : Site No.2240

(U.L.SOMAPPA) Advocate & Notary
 # 708/41, Upstairs, Sree Ramanjaneya Road Srinagar, Bangalore-560050.
(M) 94480 50108, 98806 14954
Bangalore Date : 16-04-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general Public is hereby informed that, on behalf of our Client, we are investigating the right, title and interest in relation to the properties described in the Schedule below **("Schedule Properties")** which are owned by the persons specified in the Schedule below **("Owners").** The Owners have represented that they are the absolute owners of their respective properties having unrestricted rights of alienation over the same.

Any person, including any individuals, corporate bodies, partnership firms, banks, financial institutions, other lenders and government bodies having any right, title , interest, claim, benefit, demand or interest in the Schedule Properties or any portion thereof by way of sale, lease, mortgage, charge, lien, possession, assignment, attachment, exchange, gift or transfer in any manner, tenancy, license, inheritance, easement, succession, right of way, agreements, settlement, maintenance, decree or order of any Court of Law or in any other manner is hereby called upon to intimate their objections and/or claims in writing along with documentary proof to the undersigned at the address mentioned below within **fifteen (15) days** from the date of this notice. If no such objection or claim is received, it would be deemed that no person, except the Owners, have any right, interest or claim in or in relation to the Schedule Properties and all rights, interest and claims, if any, which are not notified as stated above shall be treated as waived and not enforceable or binding on our Client and the title of the Owners to the Schedule Properties shall be treated as clear and markable.

SCHEDULE

All the piece and parcels of the following land measuring totally measuring **4 Acres 04 Guntas** situated at **Madiwala Village, Kasaba Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore.**

Sl. No.	Survey Nos.	Extent		Bounded by				Owners
		Acres	Guntas	East	West	North	South	
1.	202	0	20	Property belonging to Girish D Revankar	Government Road	Common Passage & Government Pond and Private Property	Private Property	Mrs. Shobha Kamalakar Shet
2.	202	0	20	Property belonging to R.C. Pillai & M. Amminikutty Amma	Property belonging to Kamalakar. M. Shet	Government Pond and Private Property	Private Property	Mr. Girish. D. Revankar
3.	202	0	10	Property belonging to Arun Chandran & Madhu Ramaswamy	Property belonging to Girish. D. Revankar	Common Passage & Government Pond and Private Property	Private Property	Mr. R.C. Pillai and Mrs. M. Amminikutty Amma
4.	199 and 202	0	20	Property belonging to Amal Kumar Pillai & Dr. Ruchika Jindal	Property belonging to R.C.Pillai	Common Passage & Government Pond and Private Property	Private Property	Mr. Arun Chandran & Mrs. Madhu Ramaswamy
5.	199	0	10	Property belonging to Anju Seetha Pillai and R. Appukuttan Pillai	Property belonging to Arun Chandran and Madhu Ramaswamy	Common Passage & Private Property	Private Property	Mr. Amal Kumar A Pillai and Mrs. Ruchika Jindal
6.	199	0	10	Property belonging to Laila Prasanna kumar	Property belonging to Amal Kumar Pillai & Dr. Ruchika Jindal	Common Passage & Private Property	Private Property	Mrs. Anju Seetha Pillai and Mr. R. Appukuttan Pillai
7.	199	0	10	Property belonging to Jaya R Nair	Property belonging to Amal Kumar Pillai & Dr. Ruchika Jindal	Common Passage & Private Property	Private Property	Mrs. Laila Prasanna Kumar
8.	199	0	10	Property belonging to Arun Kumar Tyagi	Property belonging to Laila Prassana Kumar	Common Passage & Private Property	Private Property	Mrs. Jaya. R. Nair
9.	199	0	10	Property belonging to R. Ranga bashyam	Property belonging to Jaya R Nair	Common Passage & Private Property	Private Property	Mr. Arun Kumar Tyagi
10.	199	0	10	Property belonging to K. Bhaskaran	Property belonging to Arun Kumar Tyagi	Common Passage & Private Property	Private Property	Mr. R. Ranga baashyam
11.	199	0	10	Property belonging to Bhuvanish Sadanand Sheth	Property belonging to R. Ranga baashyam	Common Passage & Private Property	Private Property	Mr. Bharath Kumar Bhaskar Kizhur
12.	199	0	10	Property belonging to S. Ramesh Babu	Property belonging to K. Bhaskaran	Common Passage & Private Property	Private Property	Mr. Bhuvanish Sadanand Sheth
13.	199	0	14	Property belonging to Icchan goval	Property belonging to Bhuvenish Sadanand Sheth,	Common Passage & Private Property	Private Property	Mr. S. Ramesh Babu and Mrs. V. Renuka

Signed /- **Trust Law, Advocates & Solicitors**
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End date and time of upload of BID	15.05.2024 up to 04:00 PM
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THE HINDU
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QUIZ

1. What is the process of dividing the nation into different electoral constituencies for the purpose of elections known as?
2. What is the maximum strength of members representing the states in the Lok Sabha?
3. Which Lok Sabha election witnessed the least number of candidates, with 1,519 candidates contesting in the polls?

Visit forms.thehindu.co.in/informed_voter/terms.html
Read the Terms & Conditions.

Scan the code, take the pledge, participate in the quiz and win exciting gift vouchers

Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. Calcutta
2. V S Ramadevi
3. Uttar Pradesh

KEYWORD

GETTY IMAGES

Imported inflation: how import costs can increase the prices of goods and services

The Asian Development Bank recently warned that India could face imported inflation as the rupee could depreciate amid the rise in interest rates in the West. A rise in interest rates in the West tends to cause the currencies of developing countries to depreciate

Prashanth Perumal

Imported inflation refers to the rise in the prices of goods and services in a country that is caused by an increase in the price or the cost of imports into the country. It is believed that a rise in input costs pushes producers to raise the price they charge from their local customers, thus boosting inflation.

A fall in the rupee

A depreciation in the value of a country's currency is generally seen as the most important reason behind imported inflation in an economy. This is because when a country's currency depreciates, people in the country will have to shell out more of their local currency to purchase the necessary foreign currency required to buy any foreign goods or services, which in turn means that they will effectively be paying more for anything that they import. The Asian Development Bank recently warned that India could face imported inflation as the rupee could depreciate amid the rise in interest rates in the West. A rise in interest rates in the West tends to cause the currencies of developing countries to depreciate against western currencies, which in turns can lead to higher import costs for these countries.

A rise in import costs even without depreciation in the value of a country's currency is also believed to lead to import inflation. So a rise in international crude oil prices due to fall in oil output, for instance, is expected to cause prices to rise across an economy which imports oil to produce goods and services. The idea of imported inflation, it should be noted, is simply a variant of cost-push inflation which states that a rise in the cost of inputs can lead to an inflation in the prices of final goods and services.

Consumers decide prices

Critics of the proposition that rising import costs can lead to a rise in inflation believe that it is a fallacious economic idea. They state that it might seem commonsensical to believe that input costs determine price, and hence that higher costs should lead to higher prices for goods and services. After all, it is common to see a lot of businesses in the real world raise the price of their products when their input costs rise. It may thus seem true, from an individual business' point of view, that costs determine prices.

However, the critics state, it is simply not true that costs determine price when seen from an economic point of view. Instead, they state that it is the prices that customers are willing to pay for the final goods and services that ultimately determine the cost of all inputs that go into making products.

It should be carefully noted that producers are willing to pay for various inputs based on what price they believe they can sell their final output for to their customers. So, if the cost of inputs were set at a price that is higher than what producers are willing to pay (based on final consumer demand), this would cause the available supply of inputs to go unsold as producers are unwilling to purchase the inputs. This, in turn, would cause the price of inputs to drop in accordance with final consumer demand.

Stated simply, value is imputed backwards from final consumer goods and services to inputs that go into making these final goods and services. The idea of imputation of value from final consumer goods and services to the various factors of production was elaborated famously by Austrian economist Carl Menger in his 1871 book *Principles of Economics*.

It can be further argued that even when import costs rise due to a depreciating currency, the rise in costs is still ultimately driven by the demand for the final output among consumers. To understand this, it should be noted that the value of a currency depreciates against a foreign currency when its supply becomes relatively more abundant than the foreign currency in the forex market. In other words, the exchange rate of a currency depreciates to reflect the greater demand for the foreign currency in terms of the local currency. So, the resulting rise in import costs due to depreciation itself can be seen simply as a reflection of a change in the nominal demand for inputs.

Stated simply, it is not currency depreciation that is causing input costs and the prices of final goods to rise; rather, the currency depreciation is simply a reflection of higher nominal demand for imported goods from final consumers.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

The hugely popular American fantasy drama television series *Game of Thrones* premiered on HBO on April 17, 2011. Here is a quiz on the show

Sindhu Nagaraj

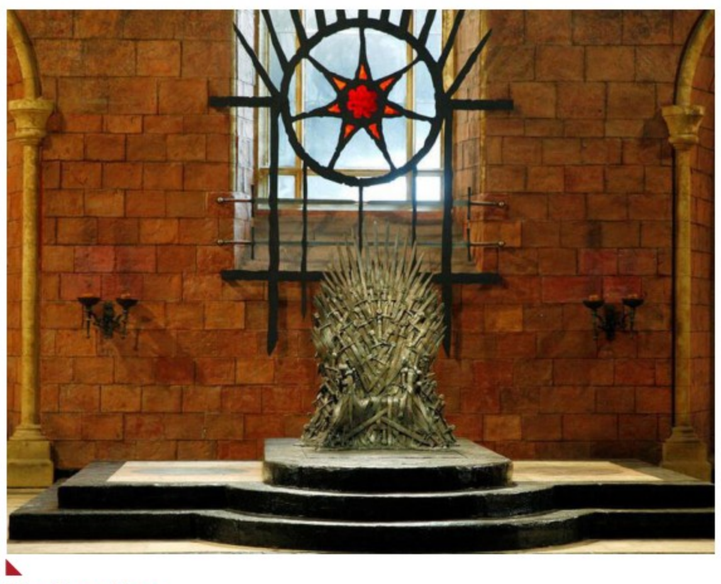
QUESTION 1
What is the name of the book series from which the show has been adapted? Name the author of the series.

QUESTION 2
What is the name of the prequel that premiered on HBO in 2022, which is the second television series in the book series franchise?

QUESTION 3
What is the name of the family that has three siblings, two of which are twins, and the other is a dwarf?

QUESTION 4
The title sequence of the show received the 2011 Primetime Emmy Award for Main Title Design. What does the sequence depict?

QUESTION 5
These two languages spoken in the show are often subtitled in English. Language-learning company Duolingo began offering courses in one of them in 2017. Name them.



Visual question:
What is the name of the throne in the image?

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. In the 2000s, declassified British archives showed that this author had secretly accused Chaplin of being a communist. **Ans: George Orwell**
2. The title of Chaplin's first war film. **Ans: *Shoulder Arms***
3. Chaplin was prosecuted in 1944 under this Act. **Ans: Mann Act**
4. The film in which Chaplin's character befriends an alcoholic millionaire. **Ans: *City Lights***
5. This French journal, named after a Chaplin film, closed in 2019 after 74 years. Its founders were two existentialist French philosophers. **Ans: Modern Times; Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone De Beauvoir**
6. Chaplin's first talkie was a satire of these two dictators. **Ans: Hitler and Mussolini**
Visual: The character portrayed by this statue. **Ans: The Tramp**
Early Birds: Jyot Prakash Gulati| Rajmohan. V| Saheni George| Imdadul Hossain Mallick| M. Suresh Kumar

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Plausible (C. S. Kamini, Thiruvananthapuram)"

"It means 'apparently fair, reasonable or valid but often specious'. It also means 'appearing worthy of belief, convincing'.

It is a plausible argument.

Whether it has a positive or a negative connotation depends on the context. When used of a person, it always has a negative connotation. 'He is a plausible salesman' means he is persuasive but deceptive.

He is a plausible liar."

"Archive or archives? (L. Panigrahi, Bhopal)"

"An archive is (a) 'a collection of public or corporate documents or records,' (b) 'the place where these are kept'. It is generally used in the plural.

He goes to the National Archives almost every day.

We have a State Archives in the city.

The first 'a' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'path,' 'ch' as 'k'; 'chives' rhymes with 'dives.' In 'archivist,' the two 'i's are pronounced like the 'i' in 'bit.'"

"Careless, carefree (S. K. Shah, Nagpur)"

"A careless person is one who does not pay attention.

He is not careful.

A carefree person is one who is free from cares and anxiety.

She is a careless driver.

Everyone wants to be carefree, but only a few are.

'Careworn' means 'showing the effects of grief or anxiety.'

He used to be cheerful, but these days he looks careworn.

This is a beautiful painting of a careworn face."

"Spoils of office (C. Ram Mohun, Vijayawada)"

" 'Spoils' here means 'public offices made the property of a victorious party in an election.' 'Spoils system' is a 'system by which important public positions are given to supporters of the political party that wins power.' The system is American in origin. It was Senator Marcy who in 1831 popularised the phrase 'to the victor belongs the spoils.' One of the meanings of 'spoils' is 'plunder taken from an enemy in war, loot'."

"Economic crunch (A. S. Shanmugam)"

" 'Crunch' means 'to chew, press or grind with a noisy crushing sound.'

He crunches apples and cashew nuts while watching TV.

When it is used as a noun, it means 'the act or sound of crunching.' In informal English, it means 'a showdown, a tight situation, specifically an economic squeeze.'"

"The Prime Minister said on Aug. 27, 1991 that the aim of the Government was to ensure that an increasing number of Indians got good things, increase in income and improvements in the overall life standards.' Is the expression life standards correct? (V. S. Murugan, Palayamkottai)"

"I have not come across 'life standards.' Perhaps the Prime Minister meant 'living standard' or 'standard of living.'"

Published in The Hindu on September 24, 1991.

Word of the day

Plethora:
extreme excess

Synonyms: embarrassment, superfluity, overplus

Usage: *They were confused by the plethora of choices in the market.*

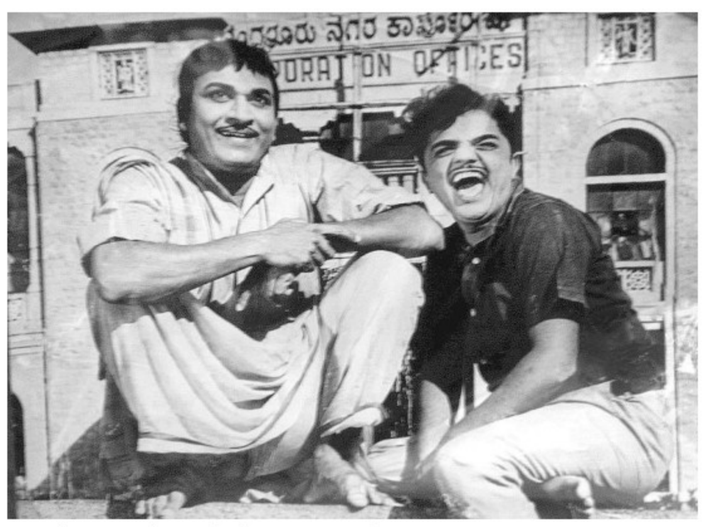
Pronunciation: bit.ly/plethorapro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈplɛθərə/, /ˈplɛðərə/, /plɪˈθɔːrə/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Dwarakish, a showman whose passion fuelled a golden period in Kannada cinema

Dwarakish in *Kulla Agent 000*.



Dr. Rajkumar and Dwarakish in *Mayor Muthanna*.

M.N. Lakshmidevi and Dwarakish at the State Film Awards 2006-07 ceremony in Bengaluru.

Dwarakish with Congress leader the late C.K. Jaffer Sharief at his 75th birthday celebrations in November 2008.

Dwarakish, accompanied by actor Vishnuvardhan, filing his nomination papers to contest elections from Hunsur Assembly segment.

Vivek M.V.
BENGALURU

Dwarakish was Kannada cinema's *prachanda kulla*, who never let his short stature get in the way of his passion for films. As an actor and producer, Dwarakish fuelled Kannada cinema's golden phase in the late 1970s and 1980s. Marked by the top-notch production value and sustained entertainment, films such as *Bhagyavantharu* (1977), *Kittu Puttu* (1977), *Singaporenalli Raja Kulla* (1978), *Manku Thimma* (1980), *Guru Shishyaru* (1981), and others became blockbusters.

"He was Kannada cinema's first showman, a moniker later given to V. Ravichandran," says senior film writer and author S. Shyam Prasad. "He didn't slot himself as a comedian and became a hero. Nobody in the Kannada film industry had even imagined shooting a film in Africa, but he pulled it off with *Africadalli Sheela* (1986)," says Mr. Prasad. Earlier, he had shot *Singaporenalli Raja Kulla*, starring himself and Vishnuvardhan, in Singapore, making it the first Kannada film to be shot abroad.

The logo of Dwarakish Chitra begins with a Karnataka map, and we see Dwarakish roaring like a lion before he breaks into laughter, an idea inspired by the iconic MGM logo. "The logo describes Dwarakish, the artiste. A comedian who loved Kannada cinema," says Mr. Prasad.

His mighty success notwithstanding, critics and detractors tagged him as "remake raja" (remake king), as more than 50% of films from his banner were remakes. "He felt Kannadigas didn't give him the recognition he deserved. He faced a hostile situation in Bengaluru, forcing him to move to Chennai," says senior film writer S. Shiva Kumar.

Shift to Chennai

The shift in place led him to work with Tamil superstar Rajinikanth in *Adutha Varisu* (1983) and *Gangvaa* (1984). "Fond memories come to my mind. The demise of my long-time friend is very painful," wrote Rajinikanth on social media.

After a purple patch, flops landed him in financial debt. Dwarakish sold some of his properties to survive in the industry. "During his prime, he led a lavish lifestyle and hosted gala New Year parties. He lived like a king, and he also lived like a pauper," says Mr. Prasad, summing up the life of an outspoken artiste who never forgot to smile even in the toughest of situations.

Dwarakish-Vishnuvardhan: A combination that did wonders at the box office

Vivek M.V.
BENGALURU

Actor-producer Dwarakish and superstar Vishnuvardhan forged a combination that gave some of the biggest hits of Kannada cinema between 1970 and 1980. Dwarakish never played second fiddle to Vishnuvardhan but an equally important role in successful movies such as *Kalla Kulla* (1975), *Kittu Puttu* (1977), *Singaporenalli Raja Kulla* (1978), *Guru Shishyaru* (1981), and *Prachanda Kulla* (1984).

"The entertainment value of these films was unmatched. During his prime, Dwarakish was a smart producer and knew the pulse of the audiences," says K. Puttaswamy, historian and author.

Hit songs

Harish Mallya, consulting curator for Bengaluru International Film Festival, says Dwarakish was a household name in the 80s.

Dwarakish at the condolence meeting held for actor Vishnuvardhan at Palace Ground in Bengaluru in January 2010.

"His humour, a combination of his expression and energy, was a great draw. Dwarakish's films with Vishnuvardhan were known for hit songs (*Aaadu Aata Aaadu* - sung by Kishore Kumar, *Nenne Nennege, Doddavaralla Jaanaralla)*. Back then, *Guru Shishyaru* was screened in several schools." *Apthamitra* (2004) *was* one of the mother-of-all comeback stories in the Kannada film industry. The combination reunited after 11 years to give one of the biggest hits of Kannada cinema. "The film rebuilt the faith in Kannada cinema for many film buffs like me, who had lost hope in the industry after the Shankar Nag era," says Mallya. The film ran for over a year.

Loss to industry

Before the reunion, the fallout between the two was a huge loss to the industry. "Dwarakish worked with newcomers such as Vinod Raj (*Dance Raja Dance)*, Shruti (*Shruthi)*, and Shashikumar (*Muddina Maava)* with little success," says senior film writer and author S. Shyam Prasad.

Even after *Apthamitra*, the Dwarakish-Vishnuvardhan friendship never really revived. Dwarakish even faced a legal battle when Vishnuvardhan's family opposed the title of his film *Vishnuvardhana*, starring Sudeep.

He tried his hands at politics and was an observer of polls

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

Like many other actors, veteran Kannada film actor, producer, and director Bungle Shama Rao Dwarakanath, better known as Dwarakish, tried his hands in politics too.

He contested the Karnataka Legislative Assembly elections from his hometown Hunsur in Mysuru district in 2004 as the candidate of the Kannada Nadu Party. Businessman Vijay Sankeshwar, who had then quit the BJP, launched the party. Dwarakish lost against G.T. Deve Gowda of the JD(S). Since then, the actor has been a keen follower of State and national politics.

About a week ago, during an informal chat with *The Hindu*, Dwarakish, renowned for his comedy roles, discussed the prospects of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, candidates contesting elections, and the role played by Kannada actors and producers in State politics.

He asked about the significance of the "guarantees" in the polls and had said: "This time, it is very interesting to see which guarantee will win - the 'Modi guarantee' or the State Congress government's guarantees." He expressed his views against the political slugfest and discussed "failures" of most film actors in politics and "success" of only a few. He keenly followed Mandya district politics, where several film stars contested polls in the past.

The actor considered his close friend and former Railway Minister the late Jaffer Sharief his "godfather" and recalled how he had helped him in undergoing the heart surgery several years ago.

The actor, always jovial despite the ups and downs, loved having friends around.

Shivarajkumar recalls his association with Dwarakish

Actor Shivarajkumar, Congress candidate Geetha Shivarajkumar, and other party leaders observed silence on hearing about the death of Dwarakish, during the poll campaign meet at Shiralakoppa in Shikaripur on Tuesday. Shivarajkumar recalled his long association with Dwarakish. Referring to him as 'uncle', Shivarajkumar said he grew up watching his father Rajkumar and Dwarakish work together for many movies.

From Page One

Actor-producer Dwarakish passes away

Dwarakish, who debuted as an actor in his maternal uncle Hunsur Krishnamurthy's Veera Sankalpa in 1964, first made a mark as a comedian before going on to become a prolific producer under the banner Dwarakish Chitra in the Kannada film industry. Collaborating with Dr. Rajkumar, and director S. Siddalingaiah, the veteran artist's first independent production, Mayor Muthanna, was a hit. Dwarakish's association with actor Vishnuvardhan is regarded as one of the most successful combinations in the Kannada film industry.

He produced and acted alongside Vishnuvardhan in *Kalla Kulla* (1975), *Kittu Puttu* (1977), *Singaporenalli Raja Kulla* (1978), *Guru Shishyaru* (1981) , *Prachanda Kulla* (1986) and *Apthamitra* (2004). As a director, Dwarakish launched Vinod Raj, son of popular Kannada actor Leelavathi, in *Dance Raja Dance*. He delivered a hit as a director with Vishnuvardhan's *Rayaru Bandaru Mavana Manege*. Dwarakish Chitra, which witnessed great highs and many lows, went on to produce over 50 films. The mortal remains of Dwarakish will be kept at Ravindra Kalakshetra in Bengaluru from 7.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday. The cremation will take place at Chamarajpet later in the day.

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JD(S) plaint to EC against DKS

Alleging a security breach at a function attended by the former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda at Kunchitiga Samudaya Bhavana in Tumakuru on Monday, the JD(S) on Tuesday complained against Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar to the Election Commission for "promoting enmity". "Police personnel did not take security measures and let numerous women, ostensibly Congress supporters, on the premises where a meeting of JD(S) and BJP leaders was being held. The women proceeded towards the stage and the police did not stop them. This is a serious security lapse," the complaint said. Seeking criminal action against Mr. Shivakumar, the party alleged, "The entire incident happened at the instigation of Mr. Shivakumar and his Cabinet colleague K.N. Rajanna."

A complaint being submitted by JD(S) and BJP members to the Election Commission.

Jaishankar on State govt.'s guarantees

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has maintained that the Congress' guarantee schemes in Karnataka will not have any impact on the LS polls. He claimed the guarantee schemes of Karnataka were not being considered seriously at the national level, unlike the Central government's "Modi *ki* guarantee" promises. "I have been in governance for almost 50 years now. Often, I hear people saying we too had such and such a scheme earlier. I began my career in Belagavi in Karnataka as a trainee officer. The then Chief Minister D. Devaraj Urs had started a scheme to provide free houses for Dalits. There would be five houses under the scheme then, but now you will get 5,000 houses under such schemes. The scalability and delivery is what is really important," he said.

> Shivaram Hebbar, MLA, is sitting at home, claiming illness. His son has joined Congress and is campaigning. They should all join Congress.
>
> **BASANAGOUDA PATIL YATNAL,** BJP MLA

Rahul to be in Karnataka today

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will be in Karnataka on Wednesday to campaign for the LS polls. He will address public meetings in Mandya and Kolar. It is his first visit to the Congress-ruled State after the announcement of election schedule. The Congress candidates in Mandya and Kolar are pitted against JD(S), which is a BJP ally.

> What you have said against the party in the past one year has caused more damage than my actions. You do not know the politics of my district.
>
> **SHIVARAM HEBBAR,** BJP MLA who has distanced himself from party

Karadi Sanganna quits BJP; speculated to join Congress

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

Ending days of speculation, two-time Member of Parliament from Koppal Karadi Sanganna, who has been upset with the BJP high command for not giving the party ticket to contest the election this time, submitted his resignation from his Lok Sabha membership and also from the party's primary membership on Tuesday.

Karadi Sanganna

Mr. Sanganna confirmed to presspersons in Koppal that he submitted his resignation letter to Speaker Om Birla through mail. He also said that he submitted a letter announcing his resignation from the BJP's primary membership to the party State president B.Y. Vijayendra.

"I have tendered my resignation as the BJP has hurt my self-respect and honour. Though the party has failed to recognise my service and good work, the people of my constituency [Koppal] are with me," he said. Mr. Sanganna, it is speculated, would join the Congress.

Mr. Sanganna was disappointed with the party senior leaders over being denied the ticket. The party has this time fielded Basavaraj S. Kyavater in his place. Although senior leaders of the party, including former Chief Ministers B.S. Yediyurappa and Basavaraj Bommai and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, tried to pacify him and his supporters, the result was not so encouraging.

Meeting with Savadi

After persistent efforts by party seniors, Mr. Sanganna had attended a couple of election meetings seeking votes for Mr. Kyavater. However, of late, he had refrained from attending party activities. On Monday, the former Minister and Congress MLC Laxman Savadi met Mr. Sanganna, further fuelling speculation about his possible exit from the BJP.

Akhanda Srinivas Murthy all set to join BJP today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The former MLA for Pulakeshinagar R. Akhanda Srinivas Murthy is set to join the BJP on Wednesday.

Mr. Srinivas Murthy, who was the Congress MLA, quit the party in 2023 when he was denied the ticket to contest the Assembly election and contested the poll on the BSP ticket. However, he lost by a huge margin to Congress candidate A.C. Srinivas back then.

R. Akhanda Srinivas Murthy

Mr. Srinivas Murthy's relations with the Congress started souring ever since miscreants attacked his house following the episode of his nephew posting allegedly derogatory content on social media in 2022 against Prophet Mohammed. Another Congress leader Sampath Raj (who had served as Bengaluru Mayor) was arrested in the case.

People from smaller BC communities feel left out in political mainstream

Though some communities are numerically not too small, they are spread thin across constituencies, bringing down their bargaining power

CASTE MATTER

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

The outburst of Fakira Dingaleshwar Swami, a Lingayat seer from Shirahatti in Gadag district, against the BJP for "ignoring" certain communities while "appeasing" some others during ticket distribution for the Lok Sabha election, has brought to the fore the undercurrent in several communities which feel that they are denied opportunity in the electoral arena in the State.

While ticket distribution during the parliamentary election is restricted to 28 constituencies, leaving limited space for caste-based manoeuvres, there has been disenchantment among many communities towards all parties since the time of the Assembly election. Particularly so among the most backward classes (MBCs), whose relatively smaller population does not provide a lever for bargaining.

Sri Dingaleshwar Swami, who has announced his candidature as an Independent from the Dharwad Lok Sabha constituency against incumbent MP and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, accused the BJP of ignoring several communities while it has given ticket to three Brahmins, who are believed to constitute no more than 2% of the State's population. The seer also spoke about how a large number of OBCs are disappointed with the ticket distribution apart from Veerashaiva-Lingayats who have not been given adequate representation in the government despite having nine MPs.

While the seer trained his guns at the saffron party, Congress sources also acknowledged that though the party has nominated OBCs in five seats, the MBCs are unhappy as they were left out during the Assembly polls and subsequently in sharing power. "At some meetings held earlier, representatives of communities have raised the issue," said a source. Christians have also expressed unhappiness at the community not being represented despite its support to the Congress, the source said.

Veerashaiva-Lingayat seers at a meeting at Moorusavir Mutt in Hubballi. Several communities, including OBCs and factions of Veerashaiva-Lingayats, feel that they are denied opportunity in the electoral arena in the State. FILE PHOTO

"Even in the larger OBC canvas, in places where Kurubas are playing a dominant role in politics, other backward classes are not happy as power has not been equally distributed. No party has distributed ticket according to the population ratio as a lion's share has been taken by the land-owning Vokkaliga and Veerashaiva-Lingayats in both BJP and Congress," another source said.

Caste-wise break-up

While Veerashaiva-Lingayats have got five ticket from the Congress and nine in the NDA alliance of the BJP and the Janata Dal (Secular), the Vokkaligas have got six ticket in the Congress and five in the NDA alliance. While Brahmins have been nominated for three seats by the saffron party, Edigas have been nominated for two seats by the Congress and for one by the BJP. Balijas and Bunts have got one each in both parties. Besides a ticket to Muslims, the Congress has given a ticket each to Reddy and Maratha communities. For the reserved constituencies, the Congress has nominated two from SC (Left) and three from SC (Right), while the BJP has nominated two from SC (Left) and one from SC (Right) besides two from the Lambani community in SC reserved constituencies.

Support crucial

Several relatively big OBC communities such as the Devanga (weavers), Uppara, and Vishwakarma do not have adequate political representation even though their support becomes crucial for parties, sources said, adding that the recent meeting of Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar with BJP MLC K.P. Nanjundi, a Vishwakarma, was one such attempt to woo numerically important communities.

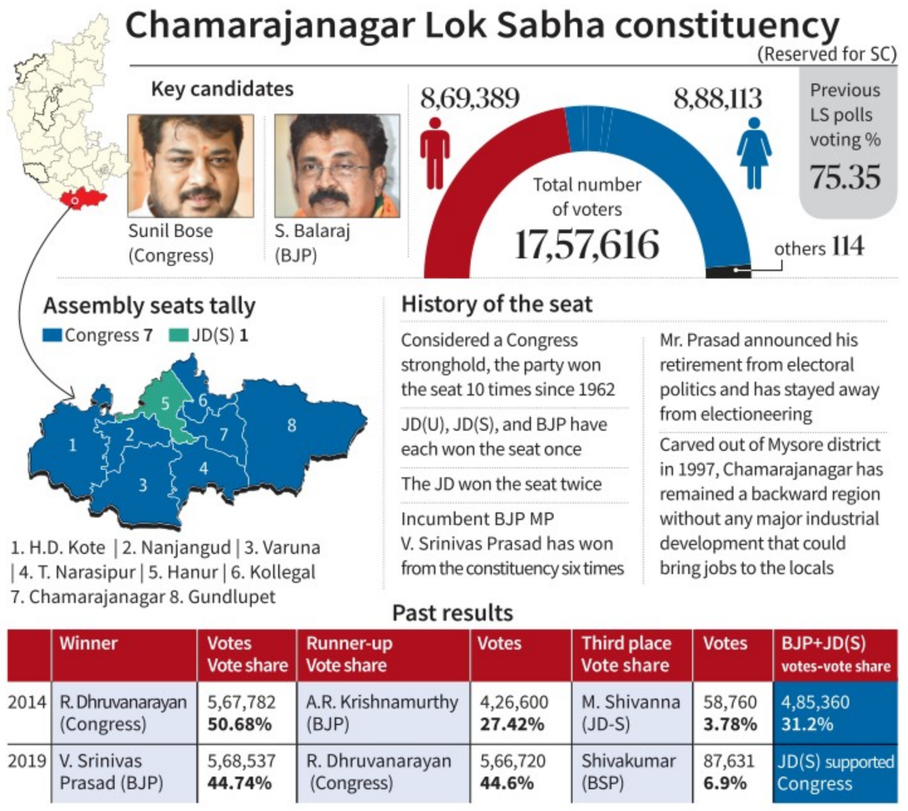
"When compared to the BJP, the Congress is a little better in terms of giving representation. Though some communities are numerically not too small, they are spread thin across constituencies, bringing down their bargaining power. In most cases pertaining to MBCs, their population do not figure much in electoral mathematics," a former member of the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes pointed out.

It's a battle of prestige for CM in this backward region as Cong. wants to wrest the seat from BJP

Shankar Bennur
MYSURU

Like the Mysuru Lok Sabha seat, Chamarajanagar (Reserved) constituency is a prestigious one for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and winning both is seen as important for his leadership within the Congress, as the BJP and JD(S) alliance has launched a no-holds-barred battle. The Varuna Assembly constituency that the Chief Minister represents falls in the Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency.

While the Congress is leaving no stone unturned to wrest the seat from the BJP, the saffron party is waging a determined fight to retain the seat that it won for the first time in 2019. Mr. Siddaramaiah has already campaigned twice for Congress nominee Sunil Bose.


Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency
(Reserved for SC)
Key candidates
Sunil Bose (Congress)
S. Balaraj (BJP)
8,69,389
8,88,113
Total number of voters
17,57,616
others 114
Previous LS polls voting %
75.35
Assembly seats tally
Congress 7 JD(S) 1
1. H.D. Kote | 2. Nanjangud | 3. Varuna | 4. T. Narasipur | 5. Hanur | 6. Kollegal 7. Chamarajanagar 8. Gundlupet
History of the seat
Considered a Congress stronghold, the party won the seat 10 times since 1962
JD(U), JD(S), and BJP have each won the seat once
The JD won the seat twice
Incumbent BJP MP V. Srinivas Prasad has won from the constituency six times
Mr. Prasad announced his retirement from electoral politics and has stayed away from electioneering
Carved out of Mysore district in 1997, Chamarajanagar has remained a backward region without any major industrial development that could bring jobs to the locals

Past results

	Winner	Votes Vote share	Runner-up Vote share	Votes	Third place Vote share	Votes	BJP+JD(S) votes-vote share
2014	R. Dhruvanarayan (Congress)	5,67,782 **50.68%**	A.R. Krishnamurthy (BJP)	4,26,600 **27.42%**	M. Shivanna (JD-S)	58,760 **3.78%**	4,85,360 **31.2%**
2019	V. Srinivas Prasad (BJP)	5,68,537 **44.74%**	R. Dhruvanarayan (Congress)	5,66,720 **44.6%**	Shivakumar (BSP)	87,631 **6.9%**	JD(S) supported Congress

Wooing Prasad

Incumbent BJP MP V. Srinivas Prasad is not in the poll scene as he has announced retirement from electoral politics after being in public life for nearly five decades. Interestingly, both Mr. Siddaramaiah and BJP veteran B.S. Yediyurappa have visited him, ostensibly to ask about his health. Mr. Prasad has not publicly announced his support for any candidate. His two sons-in-law had lobbied for the BJP ticket but the party did not consider them.

Among several ticket aspirants, the Congress chose Mr. Bose, son of Minister for Social Welfare H.C. Mahadevappa, after many rounds of consultations. Though Dr. Mahadevappa was the party's first choice, he refused to enter the poll fray and instead lobbied for his son. So it is also a battle of prestige for Dr. Mahadevappa, who has been tasked to get his son elected. T. Narasipur Assembly constituency that Dr. Mahadevappa represents also comes under the Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency.

In a surprise move, the BJP gave ticket to the former Kollegal MLA S. Balaraj. His candidature stunned many partymen as there were several strong aspirants, including Mr. Prasad's sons-in-law.

This time, the BSP's Krishnamurthy has thrown his hat in the poll ring, hoping to make an impact. In the last election, the BSP candidate garnered over 87,000 votes.

BJP's first victory

Considered a Congress stronghold, the BJP wrested the constituency from the party in 2019, with Mr. Prasad – who was forced to return to electoral politics under pressure after his rout in the byelection to the Nanjangud Assembly seat in 2017 – winning the seat. He won in a closely fought battle. Mr. Prasad defeated the then-incumbent MP R. Dhruvanarayan by a slim margin.

Seven out of the eight Assembly seats here are held by the ruling Congress. Kollegal, Chamarajanagar, Gundlupet, and Hanur (all in Chamarajanagar district) and H.D. Kote, Nanjangud, Varuna, and T. Narasipur (in Mysuru district) are part of the Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency. While the BJP holds none, Hanur Assembly segment is held by the JD(S).

The Congress and the BJP-JD(S) alliance are engaged in a political slugfest over drought relief as this dry and backward region is in the grip of an acute drought. An upbeat Mr. Bose is banking on the Congress guarantee schemes and hoping to end the saffron party's term by recapturing the seat. A soft-spoken Mr. Balaraj is relying on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image. He claims to have been "rooted to the constituency" despite remaining out of power for long and says he understands the constituency like no other.

Dalits and Lingayats are in sizeable numbers in the constituency, followed by the backward classes, minorities, and tribal people. The BJP is eyeing Lingayat votes besides the Scheduled Tribes and a section of backward classes. The party is appealing for support for "forming a stable government and giving a third term to Mr. Modi."

The Congress, on the other hand, is confident of garnering Dalit, OBC, and minority votes, besides those of a section of Lingayats and Vokkaligas.

H.D. Kumaraswamy

HDK mounts more charges against DKS

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Claiming to have documents to prove his charge, the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Tuesday reiterated his allegations that Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar had kidnapped a girl to force her parents to part with their land.

"It happened in 1996-1997. A girl was kidnapped and under threat to her parents, land had been taken. I have documents," the former Chief Minister told presspersons here. "I have documents to prove he took away the land adjoining the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway. The cheque given for the land purchase was dishonoured. I have documents for that too. He has challenged me for a discussion and I am ready to take up the challenge."

Mr. Shivakumar, meanwhile, took exception to the string of allegations, and said, "Though I respect Mr. Kumaraswamy at a personal level, he has been making baseless allegations against me. Just wait and see where his party will be after the polls."

Bengaluru non-profit's toolkit approach to address nutrition challenges in children

NSF which has implemented its programmes in more than 230 government schools is now getting ready to roll out its toolkit for private schools, with Bengaluru as one of its focus cities

INTERVIEW

Archana Sinha

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

Malnutrition among children in the age group of 0-19 years continues to be a problem in India. As per the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (2016-18), 22% of school-age children (5-9 years) were stunted and 24% of adolescents (10-19 years) were thin for their age. While that's one side of the coin, the survey also showed that conditions of overweight and obesity are on the rise.

Bengaluru-based non-profit organization Nourishing Schools Foundation (NSF) aims to address this problem by bridging awareness gaps in nutrition among school children and nudging them to become problem-solvers.

The organisation which has been taking a 'toolkit-based approach' has so far implemented its programmes in more than 230 government schools across the country, impacting over 60,000 children, says Archana Sinha, co-founder and CEO at NSF. The non-profit is now getting ready to roll out its toolkit for private schools, with Bengaluru as one of its focus cities.

In an interview with *The Hindu*, Sinha talks about the new programme, where Karnataka stands in terms of battling nutritional challenges and what to keep in mind while designing such programmes in a country where food is a complex topic.

Can you tell us about your work?
The core of our work has been helping children learn to take charge of tackling malnutrition and working with various stakeholders to enable that. So far, we've reached more than 230 schools all over the country, impacting over 60,000 children.

In Karnataka, our engagement has been more at an institutional level. Around the year 2015, we collaborated with the government of Karnataka to implement the central government guidelines on food safety, hygiene and nutrition of midday meals. GoK published a booklet in collaboration with us for the training of midday meal cook-cum-helpers.

Our toolkit is how we engage with government schools across the country. We give a box of games and activities that we have developed with different partners. The toolkit enables children to learn about nutrition in a fun way. And they go on to problem-solve by taking on various projects.

Students taking midday meal at Ganaganagar BBMP school in Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

Tell us about the relevance of the toolkit and how it is rolled out in schools?
A lot of nutrition programmes target pregnant women or young mothers. And then the focus tends to drop off. Hence, we thought of reaching out to schools and talking to children - boys and girls - from 4th to 9th grades. The toolkit was a result of this.

We map out the different topics related to health and nutrition such as diet and food, water, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture, midday meals and so on. For each of these, we partner with experts or organizations to develop games and activities. But awareness alone is not enough.

So, we use the knowledge as a base to nudge them to do a small solution-driven project.

This could be something like starting a school garden to supplement the midday meal and broaden the access to diet. We have a school garden manual to support that.

Or it could be setting up a DIY hand washing station inside the school from readily available materials.

We do a baseline survey before we roll it out in the schools so that we understand the specific challenges and we go back to the schools with a customized report.

The programme is rolled out over eight weeks, ending with a midline survey. All this happens in one academic year.

In the second year, we roll out an upgraded version of the toolkit and also carry out an endline survey to see the overall impact. We've seen that there's been a reduction in undernourishment. In some cases, there's also been an improvement in education outcomes and a change in behaviours.

We are also currently developing a model for engaging students in private schools, and we are looking at expanding our presence in Karnataka schools.

For example, we are collaborating with the Children of India Foundation to roll out our programme in seven schools in the outskirts of Bengaluru this year.

Would the toolkit for private schools be different from that for government schools?
It would be similar but with certain adaptations.

In a government school you're dealing with challenges such as absence of proper sanitation facilities or water amenities. That may not be as much of a challenge in a private school.

Archana Sinha

However, there will be other things that they will still relate to, let's say, diet-related concepts, balanced diet. So, we adapt accordingly.

When you're working with a private school lack of information is not so much a challenge. If anything they are overwhelmed by information. So with them you have to really try to simplify it and make it easy to understand.

Whereas with a government school you would be working a little bit more from the ground up and make concepts familiar to them.

The second difference is that you can leverage technology a lot more in private schools because they are familiar with it.

The third is more of a hunch because we don't have exact data.

What we have seen is that in government schools, undernourishment percentage being high is a larger challenge. On an average 15-30% of children will be undernourished and the obese and overweight tend to be in the range of 1 to 4%.

In a private school my hunch is that children being obese or overweight can also be a challenge because there you're not exactly dealing with scarcity issue most of the time. Micronutrient deficiencies and hidden hunger could be an issue. Studies have shown that as income level goes the percentage of fat intake goes up and protein intake comes down. So, we will need to talk a lot about the importance of dietary diversity and balanced diet. We're not going to be dealing with affordability issues as much.

Engaging the parents may also work a bit differently.

What are the timelines and targets for the new programme?
Our online modules should be available by next month. Around July would be a good time to kick off levels 2 and 3.

In the first year we would like to reach between 30 to 50 schools, and we are exploring different cities to see where the most uptake will be.

Personally, since we are based in Bengaluru, I would love to see at least 10 schools from our city sign up for this

There seems to be scope for improvement.

If you look at national data, previously the percentage of children under five years who were chronically undernourished was at about 38% and it's down to about 36% between the 2015 National Family Health Survey and the more recent survey that came out in 2021. That's about a 2% reduction.

In Karnataka it was about 36% and it has come down to 35.4% - barely a 1% reduction.

For the age group of 15 to 49 years we seem to be making better strides nationally. The percentages of undernourished men and women have come down by about 4 to 5 percentage points. Whereas, for the state of Karnataka that reduction has been slightly less, more in the range of 2 to 3 percentage points.

Where we see quite a difference is in the percentage of people who are overweight or obese. For men and women in India that figure is between 23 to 24% but in Karnataka it's at about 30%. This number was 22-23% previously for Karnataka. At a national level too, this statistic has gone up, but only by 2-4%.

In India food and food choices are often a topic of contention. Does that impact your operations?
We have adopted a very ground-up approach and put children in charge. The reason for that is while some solutions can be applied in all settings, others need to be tailored to that geography, climate and so on.

Something as simple as a school garden would look very different in Rajasthan or Assam. Availability of water, the things you can grow, even the local dietary patterns are all very different.

So keeping it broad enough to be relevant for an audience in a country as large as ours while also allowing for adaptation to local needs is critical and we've always thought to do that.

It's not about taking a stance of this diet versus that diet. It's important to meet people where they are in all kinds of practices, because the only way you can bring change is by giving them the flexibility to incorporate their own beliefs, habits and customs into it.

IBISA's climate insurance solution shields dairy industry from heat waves

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

IBISA, an Insurtech pioneer headquartered in Luxembourg, announced the launch of its latest innovation - the Heat Stress Solution.

In response to the significant decline in milk yield, estimated at 30-35% during severe heat waves, IBISA's Heat Stress Solution utilizes advanced climate metrics and satellite technology to provide vital protection for dairy farmers. By offering compensation for revenue losses incurred due to heat stress, this solution serves as a lifeline for dairy farmers across India.

As an Insurtech firm, IBISA collaborates with local insurers, providing comprehensive support in insurance risk modelling, design, assessment, and technological infrastructure, ultimately enabling insurers to underwrite and deliver tailored insurance products efficiently, said a release.

Since its introduction in 2024, the Heat Stress Solution has already safeguarded over 100,000 livestock within a mere fortnight, spanning 14 districts in Kerala. Notable beneficiaries include farmers associated with the Trivandrum, Malabar, and Ernakulam Regional Co-operative Milk Producers' Unions (TRCMPU, MRCMPU, and ERCMPU respectively). The product is currently operational in select districts of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat.

Balachandran M.K., IBISA's Head of Growth for Asia, said, "The surge in our solution's adoption is a clear indicator of the heightened awareness and demand for such protective measures amidst climatic adversities."

The product is currently operational in select districts of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. IBISA anticipates expanding its reach in the coming months through collaborations with multiple milk unions and key partners within the dairy value chain.

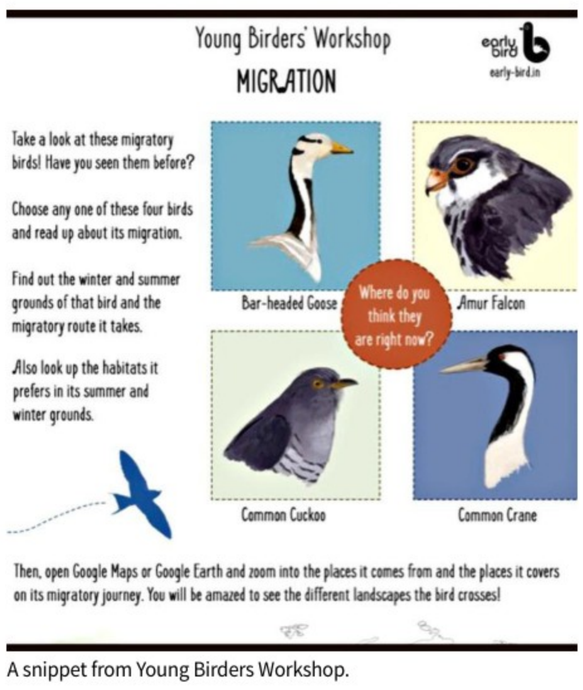
Through strategic collaborations and grassroots awareness initiatives, IBISA aims to redefine India's agri-insurance landscape, empowering farmers to navigate climate uncertainties effectively.

Early Bird to hold an online birding workshop this summer

The workshop is aimed specifically at children between the ages of 10 and 13

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

Early Bird, a Bengaluru-based not-for-profit initiative working towards bringing children and adults closer to nature through birds, will be hosting an intensive one-month-long Young Birders' Workshop for children this summer. The workshop is aimed specifically at children between the ages of 10 and 13, who are in the intermediate stage of their birdwatching journey, says Misha Bansal, Project Coordinator, Early Bird, who will be co-facilitating the workshop. "It is not for complete beginners who don't know anything, but for kids who started watching birds and need the right mentorship, opportunity and guidance to move beyond just identifying birds or knowing their names," she says.


Young Birders' Workshop
MIGRATION
early bird
early-bird.in
Take a look at these migratory birds! Have you seen them before?
Choose any one of these four birds and read up about its migration.
Find out the winter and summer grounds of that bird and the migratory route it takes.
Also look up the habitats it prefers in its summer and winter grounds.
Bar-headed Goose
Amur Falcon
Where do you think they are right now?
Common Cuckoo
Common Crane
Then, open Google Maps or Google Earth and zoom into the places it comes from and the places it covers on its migratory journey. You will be amazed to see the different landscapes the bird crosses!
A snippet from Young Birders Workshop.

Green spaces
Using a combination of multimedia, guided interactions, discussions and activities, facilitators will introduce young people to different themes related to birds, helping them independently explore green spaces around their homes. In addition to the online classes held every week, there will be supplementary videos and activity sheets, which the kids will go through on their own, filling their journals after doing these activities. "There will also be sharing classes in the middle of each week," says Bansal.

"This age group really likes to share and are very excited to talk about what they have seen. So, we have separate classes just for that."

The four-week-long programme is completely online, making it accessible to any child who has stable access to the internet and a space outside their homes. "It could even just be a balcony or terrace from which they can see birds easily," says Bansal, who hopes that these classes will nudge children to make more observations and derive conclusions from these observations.

Immediate environment
She adds that the classes are also about busting the myth that you need to visit far-off jungles or wildlife sanctuaries to see birds. Instead, it helps children understand and get close to their immediate environment, "the space where you will spend the most amount of time in your life," she says.

The Young Birders' Workshop is free to attend, but registered participants will be charged a fee of Rs. 800 for materials. Registrations are open till April 22. To know more, log into www.early-bird.in.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 17, 1974

Detective Corps to Probe Economic Offences

Bangalore, April 16: The Karnataka Government has ordered the formation of corps of detectives in the Criminal Investigation Department for investigating cases involving economic and financial offences and major crimes which require special knowledge of both law and investigation.The government also constituted a committee of senior police officers to examine the question of streamlining the detection of crime in all its aspects. The committee has observed that an expansion of the CID along the existing lines would not meet the needs of the situation. The committee has stated that with better communication facilities and with the development of science and technology criminals have aquired sophisticated methods which were unknown to the criminals of the earlier era.

Manufacture of Baker's Yeast

Bangalore, April 16. The Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, has developed a process for the manufacture of baker's yeast.

The process consists of the fermentation of clear, sterilised molasses using carefully developed yeast culture. Urea and superphosphate are used as nutrients. Aeration is employed and fermentation takes nearly 13 hours. The finished product is stored at 5°C.

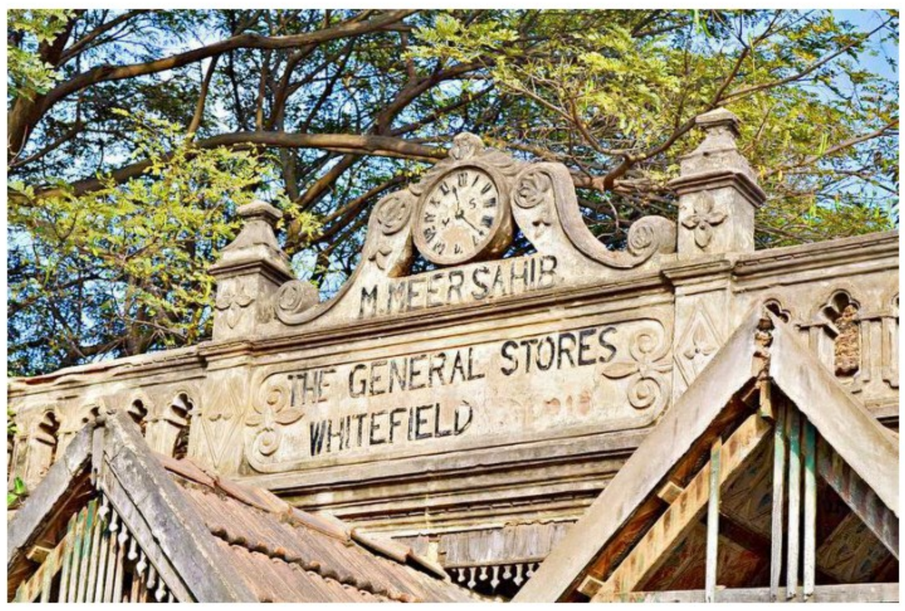
The finished product from the pilot plant has been tested to conform to Indian standards specifically for baker's yeast. A large modern bakery has found the product acceptable after trials.

Preserving the heritage of Whitefield

The Whitefield we know today is a far cry of what it once used to be, according to Babu Ajaz, a local history buff

Rashmi Gopal Rao

History in stone Whitefield's Waverly Inn of yore, the general stores and (below) a portion of the Sir Ismail Sait mosque, Babu Ajaz. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



If you ask any Bangalorean what Whitefield is synonymous with, the answers would most likely be 'ITPL', 'Tech corridor', 'IT hub' or unfortunately 'traffic'. Well, there is no denying that this locality, which was originally developed as a self-sufficient farming community for Anglo Indians in the 1880s, has undergone a sea change.

Once home to beautiful gardens and sprawling villas, the history and heritage of Whitefield is indeed engaging. One person passionate about this cause is 41-year-old Babu Ajaz whose family has been residing in Whitefield for generations. "My great grandfather moved from Medimallasandra village to Whitefield in the early 1900s to supply chicken and mutton for British settlers," says Ajaz.

History lover

History was a subject that fascinated Ajaz even as a child. Apart from studying the subject in college, he developed a keen interest in looking for history around him. "I was inspired by the stories of my maternal grandmother. My maternal grandfather was an Indian soldier who served in the 515-Army base and hence, my grandmother had a lot of stories about Anglo Indians who lived here, which piqued my curiosity. I started visiting old buildings and spoke to long-time residents of the locality to gain more knowledge about the area," adds Ajaz, who runs a provision store in Whitefield.

In a bid to connect with the local community, Ajaz and his friend, Salman Ahmed Shariff, decided to start a Facebook group. "We started Whitefielders Past & Present around 12 years ago. Initially, we used the group to update the cricket scores of our local matches. Later, I started contributing posts related to the past of Whitefield while Salman focused on civic issues." With over 4,500 members, the group serves as a great platform to share and exchange information on the past and present of Whitefield.

Engaging Facts

Since its inception, the group has been sharing some wonderful insights about Whitefield which is a revelation for most city dwellers. For instance, when the much-awaited metro to Whitefield became operational, most of us wondered why the station in front of ITPL is called Patanduru Agrahara. Well, before becoming an IT hub and startup capital of the country, Bengaluru was also a place of Vedic learning and housed several agraharas. Patanduru Agrahara, Kariyamana Agrahara, Kalena Agrahara and Dasarahalli Agrahara were just some of them.

Agarahara is land typically granted by erstwhile kings to build centres of learning and worship. According to Ajaz, there is also a Patanduru Agrahara Lake, which dates back to the 11th century in Bengaluru. An inscription stone found in a graveyard in Kadugodi mentions how King Rajendra Chola gifted land for the development of this lake to mark the 32nd year of his rule (1043 AD).

The group is a source of interesting trivia. For example, did you know that in the 1900s, the fare for a bullock cart trip from Whitefield railways station to Inner circle costed just eight annas? Or the fact that jackals and hyenas roamed freely during the 1930s around Inner circle? "All posts in the group are published after being verified from sources such as old articles and from narratives by long time residents of Whitefield, which are crosschecked with others. I do a lot of homework before putting it out."

> I started visiting old buildings and spoke to long-time residents of the locality to gain more knowledge about the area.
>
> **BABU AJAZ,** History buff and resident of Whitefield

Bengaluru calendar: An annual ritual

Since 2016, Ajaz has also been curating a Bengaluru-themed calendar. The first three years covered heritage structures and bungalows of the city. Since then, he has released calendars featuring the city's famous schools, hospitals and even theatres.

This year's calendar features eminent personalities who have a connection with Whitefield and includes people such as Sri Chamaraja Wodeyar IX, the Maharaja of Mysore who allotted the land for the formation of Whitefield; Sri Rangacharlu, the Dewan of Mysore who executed the allotment of land for the formation of Whitefield and David Emmanuel Starkenburgh White, the then president of the E&AI Association, South India Ltd who gave it the name 'Whitefield'.

Both his posts and calendars are much looked forward to and according to Ajaz, it is the enthusiasm of the community that keeps him going. Ajaz soon plans to start heritage walks around Whitefield. "We are planning to do a complete tour of Whitefield starting from the CSI Church, then moving to Inner and Outer Circle crossing the Roman Catholic Church and finally visiting the British cemetery."

EATING OUT

When East meets West on a pizza crust

Ruth Dhanaraj

Mix 'n' match Pijja offers fun combinations of familiar flavours. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Pijja
Hits: Kasundi aglio e olio spaghetti
Misses: Dosa batter onion rings
Cost for two: ₹1500

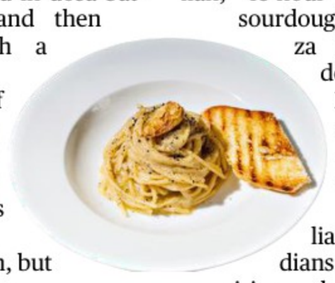
I am pretty sure most of us have heard our friends from the North say, *Chal pijja khayyenge* (C'mon let's get some pizza) in an accent that does not quite get the Z. Well, that is exactly what the founders had in mind when they opened Pijja in Indiranagar this year.

"We envisioned a diner-like space where people could hang out with friends at any time of day, enjoying good food," says Dipanita Loy, spokesperson for the space, adding that their menu features eats one can enjoy at any time of day.

Well, Pijja is definitely one of those places to try with a sporty crowd as it takes the term 'fusion food' to a whole new level.

We begin with the cheese balls. Bite into one and once you get past the crunchy cheesy goodness, a familiar and yet unfamiliar taste spreads across your palate. That would be *chitrana* – called the chitrarancini poppers, they make for great conversations starters.

Next up were the onion rings, dipped in dosa batter, fried and then dusted with a generous helping of *podi* (chutney powder). The name is straightforward enough, but the taste so-so.



Pizzas are a must try at a place called Pijja, right? When you see the name Andhra chilli margherita do not envision your favourite gravy smeared on a pizza base – there is a subtlety to the serving. You get bright green chillies and chunks of chicken served up on a 100% Italian, 48-hour fermented sourdough crust pizza base with dollops of Italian mozzarella and buratta.

The Italians, guardians of Indian cuisine and purists may shudder in disbelief, but to paraphrase Joey from *FRIENDS*, "bread good, topping good, cheese gooood".

The *kasundi* aglio e olio spaghetti was unusual, but in a good way. Those familiar with the pungence of this Bengali specialty are bound to enjoy the flavours it unfolds. As for those not in the know, it is a surprising take on the many types of pasta you may have sampled over the years.

The menu is dotted with delightful takes on the tried and tested. It takes a special sort of culinary creativity to whip up a *thecha* (Maharashtrian green chutney) or a *haleem* garlic bread, to say nothing of the "panzeroti" in vegetarian and non-vegetarian options, and the coconut truffle aioli.

Then, when you finally want the gastronomic roller coaster you have been on to slow down, there are a range of gelatos such as blueberry cheesecake, gianduia, watermelon, lemon yoghurt and bubblegum, depending on the flavours Pijja churns out that day.

Boba teas, cold brews, iced teas and milk shakes also vie for your attention. But if you have had too much of an adventure, and still crave something sweet, a cup of their special roasted hazelnut latte should hit the spot.

Happy start to a happy heart The special Thingyan spread at Burma Burma. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

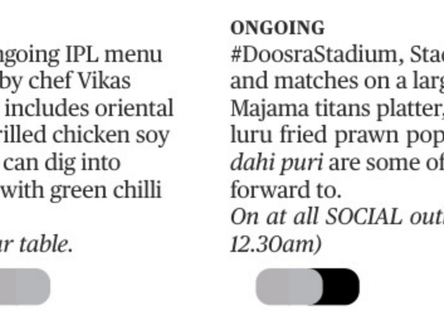
Celebrating Thingyan, the Burmese New Year

Prabalika M Borah

Burma Burma is celebrating the Thingyan Festival, the Burmese New Year, with a limited-edition menu. This unique menu, available only until May 19 for lunch and dinner, showcases a variety of Burmese home-style food.

The dine-in-only vegetarian menu, available in Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad, is a culinary journey into the heart of Burmese culture. As community eating is a cherished part of Burmese food culture, the menu features an array of small plates with authentic Burmese dips, small eats, breads, main course and desserts. The menu also has a selection of signature non-alcoholic drinks like Twilight, Plum Sour, El Dragon and Musk.

The fest menu with a set platter, titled 'Village set' showcases the use of fresh citrus fruits for salads, seasonal greens like sorrel (gongura), fermented tea leaves for dips and tubers and beans in their dishes. Each set is sufficient for two and comes on a flat cane trough with dishes like zesty sweet lime and shallot salad, assorted fries platter (sweet potato sticks, samosa), peppery tofu and onion stir fry to go with flaky palata (paratha). It also includes a traditional pumpkin broad bean curry to go with fragrant coconut rice and a roselle and king mushroom stir fry.



Explaining the signature dishes Ankit Gupta, Co-Founder of Burma Burma says, "Coconut rice, traditionally known as Ohn Hatmin, is a ceremonial dish served on special occasions, made with fragrant short-rice cooked with raisins and onions in fresh coconut milk. The rice pairs perfectly with the light flavourful pumpkin and broad bean curry. The peppery tofu and onion stir fry is a savoury delight showcasing the mastery of the Bamar cooking style."

For desserts, the lemon poppy seed ice cream, a citrusy delight with black poppy seeds, whipped cream, and mint will awaken your palate. There is also 'Mont Lone Yay Paw,' a traditional Thingyan sweet made with glutinous rice flour dumplings filled with palm jaggery and topped with shredded coconut - a festive delight shared among communities in Burma.

The fest is on till May 19. Table for two ₹1850.

CITYBEATS

Desserted!

ONGOING
Celebrate new beginnings with Chowman's range of new desserts – pineapple coconut and strawberry panna cotta. There are also creamy layers of their classic white mousse and chocolate mousse.
Available for dine in (at all Bengaluru outlets) and on the Chowman App, Swiggy and Zomato. Call 18008902150 for details.

Flavours that match

ONGOING
Sriracha Bangalore has an ongoing IPL menu that has been curated menu by chef Vikas Seth. The non-vegetarian list includes oriental shrimp and vermicelli and grilled chicken soy oyster. The health conscious can dig into togarashi dusted grilled tofu with green chilli and coriander.
Call 9606054210 to book your table.

IPL, food and fun

ONGOING
#DoosraStadium, Stad-Yum offers drinks, food and matches on a large screen.
Majama titans platter, howzat *chapli* tacos, luru fried prawn popcorn, and SOBO guac *dahi puri* are some of the dishes you can look forward to.
On at all SOCIAL outlets till May 29 (9am to 12.30am)

'Fighting against DMK, AIADMK is undoubtedly challenging for NDA'

While interacting with journalists of *The Hindu*, TMC(M) president G.K. Vasan says cadres of the NDA are able to match the work of the two Dravidian majors on the ground

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) president G.K. Vasan on Tuesday said the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the State has taken a new avatar to fight both the Dravidian majors – the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) – and will "win a considerable number of seats" in the upcoming Lok Sabha election.

While interacting with journalists at *The Hindu* office in Chennai, Mr. Vasan admitted that it is a challenging election for all fronts, particularly the NDA.

"This is not an easy election for anybody. It is a challenging election, especially for the BJP front. We have taken a new avatar, fighting against the DMK, the ruling party with money power, muscle power and government power.

TMC (M) president G.K. Vasan R. RAGU

On the other hand, we have the AIADMK, the party which ruled the State on many occasions and proved its vote share. So when we have decided to fight both these parties, no doubt it is challenging."

Mr. Vasan also said the BJP has grown in the State, even at the village level. He said with the support of their allies, the PMK, the AMMK, the TMC(M) and former Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam "who enjoys considerable clout in the southern part of the State", the BJP-led front will be able to put up a tough fight.

He further said though the cadre base of the DMK and the AIADMK is more than that of the NDA, the latter's partners are working hard on the ground to match the Dravidian parties.

NDA's strength

He said, "On the ground, if about 50 cadres are working for the DMK and 45 for the AIADMK, we [NDA] have only around 25, but I am happy to see that we can still do the work of 50 cadres. That is the strength of the third front. Our cadres are going door-to-door to reach the people and tell them about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the economic growth, and safety of the country."

Commenting on the electoral bonds issue, Mr. Vasan said, "There was one system for all the parties in India. The bonds were not only for the BJP. Naturally, whichever party is in power at the Centre would get more bonds."

He also observed the ratio of electoral bonds received by the DMK was more than that of the BJP. "Among the regional parties, when compared to the BJP, the ratio of bonds received by DMK is high. I want to make it clear that the electoral bond scheme was introduced to create transparency. If the court feels there is no transparency in the scheme, let there be a new way. A common ground for all the parties, which will help the public to know the transparency of election funding."

Inequality, inflation and unemployment at an all-time high: Parakala Prabhakar

Parakala Prabhakar, N. Ram and A.S. Panneerselvan at an event organised by Chennai Thinkers Forum. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Inequality, unemployment among youth, inflation of various commodities and household debt are at an all-time high in the country, said political economist Parakala Prabhakar, here on Tuesday.

Speaking at a national colloquium on the present political situation titled "The values at stake", organised by Chennai Thinkers Forum, Mr. Prabhakar, who is also the author of the book *The Crooked Timber of New India*, said there is a serious unemployment problem in India, particularly among youngsters in the age group between 20 and 25. Mr. Prabhakar also quoted a report by the World Inequality Lab and said that inequality in India is at a historic high, even when compared to the British rule.

'Values subverted'

Speaking at the event, N. Ram, Director, The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited, said the integral values of the Indian Constitution such as diversity, pluralism, secularism, equality before law, freedom of speech and expression, liberty, equality and fraternity have been subverted in the BJP's "Hindutva autocratic regime".

He also said the speech of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his election campaign in Bihar, a few days ago, accusing the Congress of boycotting the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla at Ayodhya was a blatant violation of Model Code of Conduct. He further said the country has slipped in the World Press Freedom Index rankings released by Reporters without borders, post 2014.

N. Murali and N. Ravi, Directors, The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited; A.S. Panneerselvan, Fellow, Roja Muthiah Research Library in Chennai; Vijaya Thayanban, convener, and Manimegalai Thirunavukkarasu, member of Chennai Thinkers Forum, were among those who participated in the event.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday

TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy rainfall/snowfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, central Maharashtra, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Rayalaseema, Kerala and Mahe.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	38.4	24.3	Kozhikode	—	37.8	28.8
Ahmedabad	—	41.3	27.0	Kurnool	—	43.0	28.3
Aizawl	0.2	36.5	20.4	Lucknow	—	38.8	24.4
Allahabad	—	42.1	26.4	Madurai	—	36.6	26.6
Bengaluru	—	36.7	21.6	Mangaluru	—	35.1	26.5
Bhopal	—	39.3	23.0	Mumbai	—	39.7	27.5
Bhubaneswar	—	41.9	26.5	Mysuru	—	37.5	21.0
Chandigarh	2.2	34.7	20.9	New Delhi	—	35.8	23.5
Chennai	—	35.7	27.8	Patna	—	40.0	28.9
Coimbatore	—	37.4	25.4	Port Blair	—	34.0	26.8
Dehradun	—	34.7	19.2	Puducherry	—	35.4	26.4
Gangtok	7	19.0	15.0	Pune	—	41.2	26.0
Goa	—	34.6	26.4	Raipur	—	39.8	25.0
Guwahati	0.6	30.0	24.2	Ranchi	—	37.0	24.4
Hubballi	—	39.0	24.0	Shillong	2	25.2	15.5
Hyderabad	—	39.8	27.1	Shimla	—	25.8	15.0
Imphal	—	32.7	15.8	Srinagar	28	19.5	7.6
Jaipur	—	36.4	26.4	Thiruvananthapuram	0.8	33.9	27.2
Kochi	14	33.6	25.6	Tiruchi	—	38.7	26.4
Kohima	—	24.1	15.8	Vijayawada	—	40.4	25.6
Kolkata	—	40.0	28.5	Visakhapatnam	—	37.3	29.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	—	65	38	99	91	
Bengaluru	10	16	24	102	109	
Chennai	9	9	98	74	76	
Delhi	21	63	37	258	319	
Hyderabad	5	37	51	72	108	
Kolkata	13	10	70	65	82	
Lucknow	10	11	44	158	114	
Mumbai	65	122	42	152	114	
Pune	108	147	116	62	69	
Visakhapatnam	14	44	24	71	112	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 305 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Palkalaiperur, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 28

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SURESH.M, R/a No.246, 5th Cross, Near Church Road, Veerabhadranagar, BSK 3rd Stage, Bengaluru-560085 have changed my minor son's name from Uday Gowda.S to Ajay.S vide affidavit dt: 15.04.24 sworn before Notary Sakina Bano, B'luru.

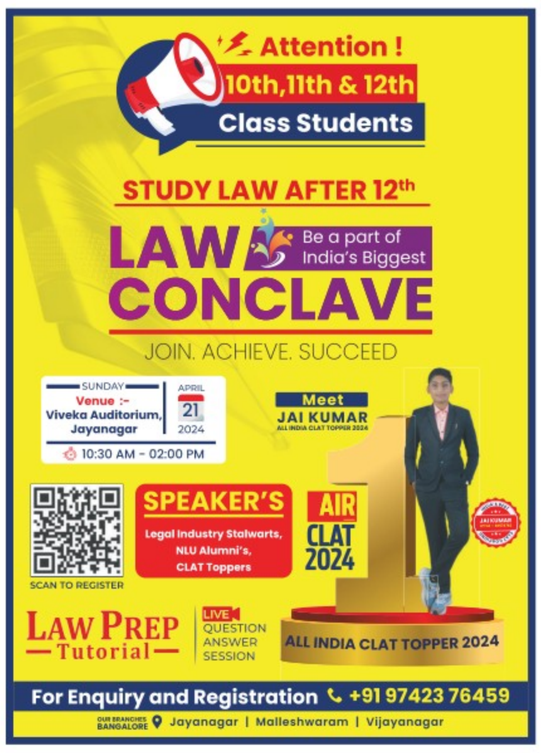
PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, BHAVYA Sutwala D/o Lt Rajdeep Mithal LIG Flat 203, Sarita Vihar, New Delhi 110076 have changed my name to Bhavya Mithal sworn before Notary Gangaraju B.N. Vide affidavit dated 12/04/2024 Bangalore-560032. Henceforth I shall be called as Bhavya Mithal Only.

EDUCATIONAL

GENERAL



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By RAVINDRA N. JHA
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MANISH SHARMA AIR 307
ROOPAK SHARMA AIR 429
MONIKA SRIVASTAVA AIR 455
BHAVIKA CHOPRA AIR 476
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NEHA BYADWAL AIR 569
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VAIBHAV RAJ SINGH AIR 869
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Batch - 2 11 JUNE
Batch - 3 26 JUNE
Batch - 4 16 JULY
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9811343411, 9811343464, 9811343938

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, ASHRAF V M, S/o Mohammed Kunju V M, R/a #Vazheparampil, Kanjirapally Post, Kottayam, Kerala, Pin-686507 now camped Bengaluru have changed my name to V M Ash Araf vide affidavit dt: 16.04.2024 sworn before Notary S.I.Balaguru, B'lore

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NAZNEEN Khan @ Nazneen Khannum, D/o Shabbir Ahmed, R/a #1174, Tower-I, Prestige Gulmohar Apartment, near BBMP office, Kalkere Main Road, Jayanthi Nagar, Horamavu, Bengaluru-560043 have changed my name to Myra vide affidavit dt: 16.04.2024 sworn before Notary Meer Hassan, B'lore.

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LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, AT BENGALURU
4th Floor, Telephone House Building, Raja Bhavan Road, BENGALURU- 560 001
IN THE MATTER OF O. A. No. 1062/2023

Between
ICICI Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
Versus
Mr. Mohammed Javid & other ...Defendants

SUMMONS ISSUED TO DEFENDANT No. 1 AND 2 UNDER RULE 23 (VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY PAPER PUBLICATION

DEFENDANTS No.1 and 2 :
1. Mr. Mohammed Javid, Son of Abdul Basith, Aged about 42 years, Residing at No. 176/B, 13th Main Road, 4th Block, Koramangala, Bangalore-560 034, PAN No. AFLPJ0886K, PH. 9845789802. Email ID: mohammed.javid@target.com
2. Farah Javid, W/o Mohammed Javid, Aged about 44 years, Residing at No. 176/B, 13th Main Road, 4th Block, Koramangala, Bangalore-560 034, PAN No. AKPPT3745C, PH. 9845789802.

WHEREAS the Applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institution Act, 1993 against you for recovery of a sum of **Rs. 40,58,848.66/- (Rupees Forty Lakhs Fifty-Eight Thousand Eight hundred and Forty-Eight and Sixty-Six Paise only)** together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.
You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication of this summons or on **05/08/2024** at **11:00 A.M.** in person or by pleader/ Advocate duly instructed as to why the reliefs prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal on this **05th** day of **April, 2024**.

By order of the Tribunal
Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, Bengaluru

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, AT BENGALURU
4th Floor, Telephone House Building, Raja Bhavan Road, BENGALURU- 560 001
IN THE MATTER OF O. A. No. 1071/2023

Between
ICICI Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
Versus
Mr. Sriharsha B R and Ors. ...Defendants

SUMMONS ISSUED TO DEFENDANT No. 1 AND 2 UNDER RULE 23 (VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES OF 1993 BY PAPER PUBLICATION

DEFENDANTS No.1 and 2 :
1. Mr. Sriharsha BR, Son of Bellibatlu Keshava Murthy Ramkrishna Rao, Aged about 39 years, Residing at No. 15, Padmanabhanagar, 16th Main, 2nd Cross, Balaji Layout, Bangalore- 560 070, PAN No. BNCPS1120H, PH. 9980988002.
2. Anjana Sriharsha, Wife of Sriharsha, Aged about 30 years, Residing at No. No. 15, Padmanabhanagar, 16th Main, 2nd Cross, Balaji Layout, Bangalore- 560 070, PAN No. GHPPS9091M, PH. 9980988002.

WHEREAS the Applicant has instituted an application under section 19 of Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institution Act, 1993 against you for recovery of a sum of **Rs.62,57,178.59/- (Rupees Sixty-Two Lakhs Fifty-Seven Thousand One Hundred and Seventy-Eight and Fifty-Nine Paise only)** together with current and future interest, cost and other reliefs.
You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication of this summons or on **01/08/2024** at **11:00 A.M** in person or by pleader/ Advocate duly instructed as to why the reliefs prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default the application will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal on this **01st** day of **April, 2024**.

By order of the Tribunal
Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, Bengaluru

TENDERS

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Corporate Office, Mamala P.O., Thiruvankulam (Via), Kochi-682 305, Ph: 0484 2310012/13/14
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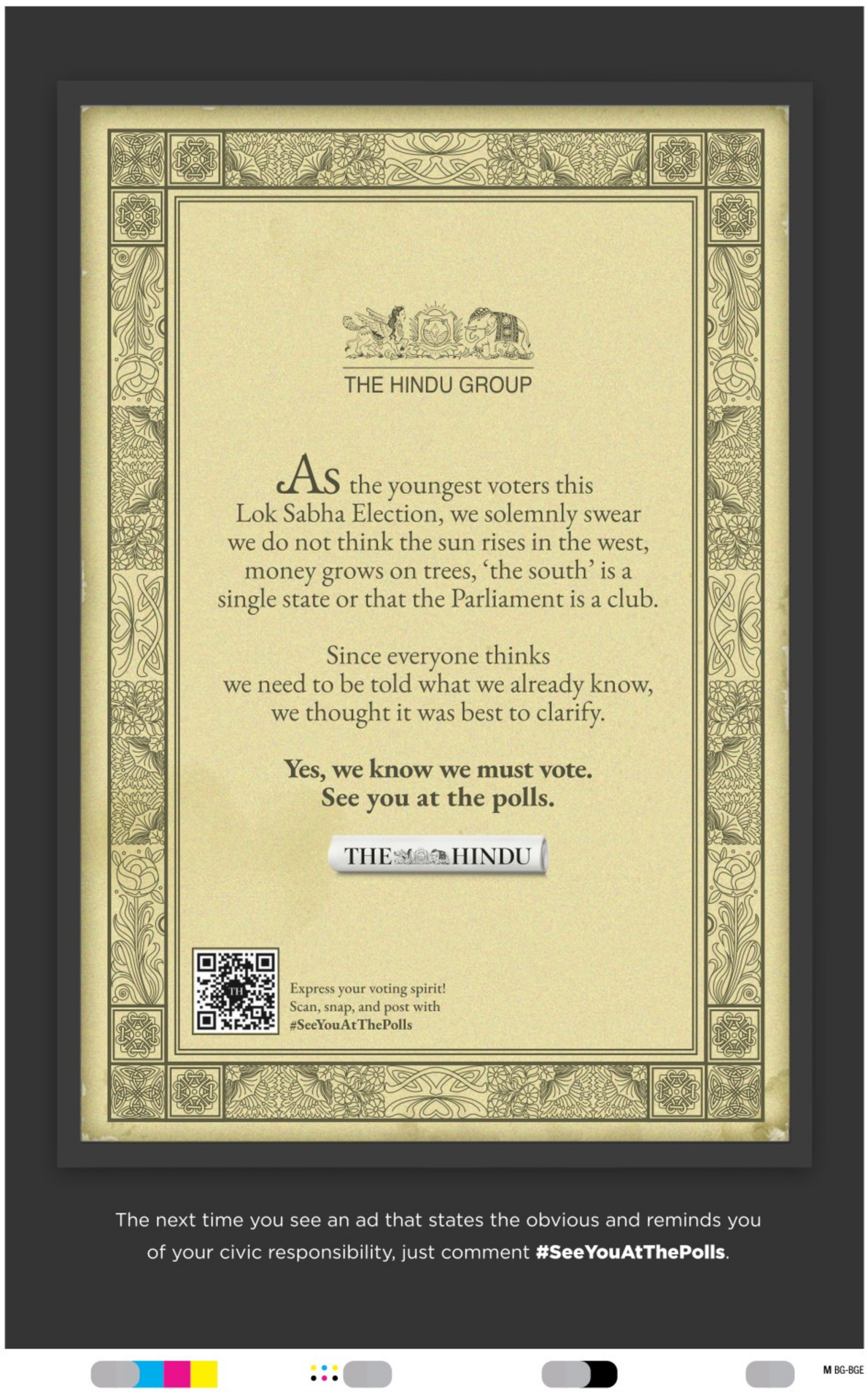
For details visit our Web Site: www.kel.co.in
Kochi 12.04.2024 Sd/- Dy. General Manager - i/c (BDC)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In the fray

Lokniti survey suggests that the Lok Sabha contest is not done and dusted

In a country the size and diversity of India, voter choices can be a bundle of contradictions that require careful parsing to unpack and understand. On the one hand, the CSDS-Lokniti pre-poll survey 2024 findings, that unemployment and price rise are the issues of most concern to prospective voters, come as no surprise. In a country with a large youth population and a relatively low per capita income, the lack of sufficient jobs and the persistence of high inflation should be major issues of concern. The survey also reveals that more than half the respondents felt that corruption had increased in the last five years. In its 10-year term, the performance of the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government on the economic front has been rather mediocre, with little being done to lower unemployment even as it has pursued policies that have significantly benefited the elite over the masses. Even as the BJP seeks to emphasise issues such as the inauguration of the Ram temple and Hindutva at high decibel level in its campaigning, the survey reveals that these two issues do not have a high resonance in comparison to livelihood concerns. But the survey also shows that the BJP and its allies have a comfortable 12 percentage point lead over the INDIA bloc, with "leadership" and socio-cultural issues determining higher preference for the ruling party.

The dichotomy in voter perceptions on key issues versus their possible choices provides comfort and concern to both the alliances and the other parties in the fray. While the BJP has engaged in bluster about winning nearly 400 of the 543 seats in Parliament, the chief concerns related to the economy suggest that the party is not having it as easy as it did in 2019, despite the gap in vote shares as expressed in the survey. As for the Opposition, harping on an alternative agenda related to the economy and livelihood concerns could provide it with an opening to narrow down the gap in vote shares in the run-up to the actual hustings. While the poll survey had not focused on State-level dynamics, recent Assembly elections have shown a sharpening of the north-south political divide, with the BJP unable to sway the south on socio-cultural issues as much as it is able to do so in the Hindi heartland and other areas. That close to half the respondents laid out livelihood issues as key concerns should provide an opportunity for the political messaging across the country to be a contest of ideas – about which political group offers the best deal in addressing these concerns. Lastly, it is alarming that nearly 58% of the respondents had lost some or a great amount of trust in the Election Commission of India. The institution must address concerns about the voting process, while asserting its independence in order to regain trust.

Step back

Israel should stand down to avoid a regional war in West Asia

Iran's massive drone and missile attack on Israel on April 14 night, in retaliation against the bombing of its embassy compound in Damascus two weeks earlier, has pushed an already volatile West Asia to the brink of an all-out war. Iran lost two of its generals, including Mohammed Reza Zahed, overseeing the Quds Force's operations in Syria and Lebanon, and five senior officers of the Revolutionary Guards, and an Iranian response was expected. In the past, Iran has used its proxies or targeted Israeli assets in other countries in response to Israel's attacks on its officials. But this time, Tehran's weapons barrage from its soil targeted Israel proper, escalating tensions to levels not seen in West Asia in decades. Israel, with help from the U.S., the U.K., France and Jordan, intercepted "99%" of the Iranian projectiles. Iran says its action was in "self-defence" as a response to the embassy attack and that the matter is concluded for now. The U.S. and other allies of Israel applauded Israel's missile defence system, and urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to exercise restraint, avoiding a regional war. But Israel has vowed that Iran's aggression would be met with a response.

In many ways, West Asia remains a geopolitical morass today. Israel's brutal, illegal siege of Palestinian territories was ignored for long by regional and global players. Hamas launched a murderous attack from the blockaded Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, leaving an open wound in Israel's collective psyche. Since then, Israel has been carrying out a vengeful, genocidal attack of Gaza. The U.S., Israel's most influential ally, failed to rein in Tel Aviv when it went on a rampage in Gaza and launched multiple attacks in the region, including the extremely dangerous bombing of Iran's embassy compound. Iran, which backs Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis, also failed to show any restraint. Now the region is on a cliff and a mild push is enough to trigger a calamity. Mr. Netanyahu's security and war policies have failed miserably. He could not prevent the October 7 attack. His war on Gaza has turned the enclave into a graveyard but has failed to defeat Hamas and release hostages, and his reckless bombing campaigns in the region have brought Iran and Israel to the brink of war. If an open war breaks out, both Israel and Iran can wreak havoc on each other, turning the whole region, the energy basket of the world, into a battlefield. Mr. Netanyahu should consider the remarkable performance of Israel's defence systems as a victory and stand down to avoid a regional war. If Israel does so, it would open a window of opportunity to dial down tensions in West Asia.

A referendum on India's future

Shashi Tharoor

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Even as campaigning gathers pace for the 2024 general election, distant seem the days when the world hailed our elections as a wondrous and clamorous affair that reaffirmed our greatest achievement: being the world's largest democracy. But the past decade has diminished us in the eyes of the world, and to some extent our own, to an "electoral autocracy". There is a palpable sense that in this election, we are fighting to save our democracy itself.

It is impossible to escape the widespread perception that our elections increasingly sustain only the bare bones of democracy, even as its sinews – the legislature, judiciary, media, "autonomous" watchdogs such as the Election Commission of India and the Reserve Bank of India, and agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation – are either hollowed out or hijacked.

More pernicious still is the politics of hate, vigilantism in the name of religion, and the demonisation of minorities that the Bharatiya Janata Party government and its fellow travellers have promoted. Together with the intimidation of large sections of the media, the purchasing of Opposition Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly and the villainisation of dissidence as "anti-national", democracy is gasping for air in the suffocating embrace of its self-proclaimed "Mother".

As we elect our 18th Lok Sabha, at stake here are not only 543 seats but also the India of our Constitution, the Hindustan which Iqbal eulogised as *saare jahaan se achcha*, and the Bharat for whose pluralism and inter-religious coexistence Mahatma Gandhi laid down his life; 2024 is a referendum on India's future: a choice between a hateful ethno-nationalism that disdains democratic accountability, and a civic nationalism – anchored in the Constitution and its institutions – that safeguards our democracy and diversity.

Much has changed

Our first general election of 1951-52, the most audacious democratic experiment in history, was also a referendum on India's future. The farther we drift from that moment in time, the more we take for granted its majesty. To remember it now, over 70 years later, is to realise how much has changed.

The spadework of nearly five years, carried out in cataclysmic conditions, preceded that general election. Onerous enough were the tasks of nation-building and reversing the depredations of colonial rule, but the makers of modern India had a lot more to reckon with: the flames of Partition had to be doused and refugees rehabilitated, the ferocious invasion of Kashmir had to be quelled, and over 500 princely states with recalcitrant rulers had to be drawn into the Union. Yet, nothing could dampen the democratic zeal of Jawaharlal Nehru and his compatriots. While many other decolonised nations tumbled into authoritarianism, India drafted a trailblazing Constitution, affording a largely indigent and illiterate populace universal adult franchise: something even the United States, the world's oldest modern democracy, had not yet done. With the passage of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, we began evolving a system of voting for our enormous, geographically diverse country with 176 million eligible voters, about 85% of them unlettered. An American observer noted that the challenge of preparing for the world's largest election was of "colossal proportions".

As Indians wait to elect their 18th Lok Sabha, at stake are not only 543 seats but also the 'India' and 'Bharat' of the Constitution

A quest to translate a vision into a reality

Far from building a cult of personality around himself to consolidate his power, Nehru faced, even before the electoral contest of 1951-52, a formidable challenge to his values and leadership from within his own party. In August 1950, Purushottam Das Tandon had become president of the Congress. The elderly and socially conservative Tandon represented everything Nehru detested: a belief in the primacy of Hindus over India's minorities, a searing mistrust of Muslims, and a fervour for Hindi's nationwide imposition.

In Nehru's view, Tandon's presidency blurred the lines between the Congress and communal organisations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha. Worried that the party was abandoning its ideals, Nehru resigned from the Congress Working Committee, Parliamentary Board and Central Election Committee, stopping just short of quitting the party itself. Terrified of losing their foremost vote-getter right before the election, the Congress rallied behind the Prime Minister. This compelled Tandon to resign in September 1951, at which point Nehru himself was elected president.

With the party in his thrall, Nehru strove to reshape it into a vehicle for delivering a "stable, secular and progressive" India. Though it inherited the legacy of our freedom struggle, the Congress was never unopposed – not even at the genesis of our democracy. From J.B. Kripalani and Jayaprakash Narayan to Babasaheb Ambedkar and S.P. Mookerjee, redoubtable leaders of all stripes berated Nehru and the Congress every day. Not one to criticise the Opposition for doing their job, and frequently commending them on the campaign trail, Nehru devoted himself to translating the Constitution's vision into reality.

Desiring greater representation of women in Parliament, he wrote to the Chief Ministers in 1950 and suggested they encourage women legislators to resign from the State assemblies and contest for the first Lok Sabha. As adoring crowds swirled around him everywhere on the campaign trail, he persistently reminded them to exercise their franchise: "It does not matter for whom you vote," the star campaigner of the Congress would say, "but vote."

While the intoxicating popularity of two men – two Prime Ministers – characterises both our first and latest general election, the ideas of India they embody are radically antithetical. Weeks ahead of the 2024 general election, the bank accounts of India's largest Opposition party were frozen and an incumbent Chief Minister, a leading light of the Opposition, was cast behind bars. Long gone is Nehru's age, where even the Communist Party of India, which had launched an armed rebellion against the Indian state in 1948, was welcomed into the political fray as a legitimate competitor. In the event, the Communists emerged second, garnering 16 out of 489 seats in the first Lok Sabha and testifying to the freeness and fairness of our great experiment with democracy.

Indians went to the polls in 1951-52 amid a surcharged communal atmosphere. While the horrors of Partition continued to haunt their victims, the reprehensible persecution of Hindus in East Pakistan had led to vengeful violence against the Muslims of Calcutta, sparking more atrocities against Hindus in Dacca and its vicinity. This bolstered Nehru's resolve to pursue, regardless of how Pakistan treated its minorities, his efforts at forging a secular state, making him thunder in Parliament that "we shall not let India be slaughtered at the altar of bigotry". Commencing his electoral tour at Ludhiana in 1951, he declared an "all-out war against communalism", lambasting parties that in the garb of Hindu and Sikh culture were spewing hatred like the Muslim League had once done. Nehru waged a battle in defence of India's soul, and called upon ordinary Indians to be his soldiers: their votes were to determine our future. Sure enough, harmony triumphed over hatred, with Jawaharlal Nehru leading the Congress to a resounding victory.

A battle again

Standing alone before a ballot box during the first general election, 107 million Indians (out of the 176 million eligible), their breaths held in awe, cast their votes and became the custodians of India's fate. Today, 17 general elections later, we are again waging a battle for India's soul. Let us honour the wisdom of our ancestors of the 1950s, who voted for an India that belonged to everyone, where Ram and Rahim were equivalent, and where their devotees together toiled to propel this country to dazzling new heights.

Such an India appals our ruling party. Petrified of the power of a united people, it has sought to divide us, hoping we never rise as one in defence of our republic. The choice is ours. We have already witnessed a partition of the Indian soil; the past decade has threatened to partition the Indian soul. This we must resolutely oppose, for in the words of our first Prime Minister: "Who lives if India dies?"

The writer acknowledges the contribution of Baawa Sayan Bajaj in the preparation of this article

No support from the BJP, 'partial allies' in the Opposition

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From opposing the legalisation of same-sex marriage in the Supreme Court of India initially to maintaining a diplomatic silence after the Court handed down its eventually disappointing judgment in 2023 (in *Supriyo @ Supriya Chakraborty & Anr. vs Union of India*), the Congress party has released its Nyay Patra, its election manifesto for 2024, which has a dedicated section on the rights of senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ people. The party promises that, if elected to power, they would fulfil the Court's mandate of ensuring a high-powered committee at the Union government level is set up to hold widespread consultations with relevant stakeholders to pass a law legalising civil unions for LGBTQ+ couples.

A few things must be noted here. First, during the marriage equality hearings, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Bharatiya Janata Party government, opposed marriage equality and sought the views of all States and Union territories. At that time, there was a studied silence by the Congress. However, the Rajasthan Congress, led by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, weighed in, stating in his submissions that legalising same-sex relationships would create "imbalance" in the social fabric of the country, and would lead to "widespread consequences for the social and family systems". What these consequences were and how legalising such marriages could lead to "imbalance" and not "inclusion" remains a mystery.

State responses

As per the Centre's submissions, Assam (led by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of the BJP) and Andhra Pradesh (led by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of the YSR Congress) joined Rajasthan in opposing same-sex marriage. Meanwhile, Maharashtra (led by Eknath Shinde of the Shiv Sena), Uttar Pradesh (led by Yogi Adityanath of the BJP), Manipur (led by N. Biren Singh of the BJP), Sikkim (led by Prem Singh Tamang, of the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha), and Assam (led by Himanta Biswa Sarma of the BJP) sought more time to examine the issue. Trinamool Congress leader and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, when asked about the issue, said rather diplomatically, "I love people who love others. This matter is sensitive, and I have to see the pulse of the people." In short, not a single State government expressed support for the cause.

That the Congress and the CPI(M) have added LGBTQ+ rights to their manifestos is significant, but their half-hearted approach defies their liberal credentials

Once the judgment was eventually pronounced, Communist Party of India (CPI) leader and Rajya Sabha MP, Binoy Viswam, was one of the few lone political voices displaying solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community, calling the judgment "unfortunate." Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP, Jairam Ramesh also weighed in, stating that the party was "studying" the different judgments (there were four separate opinions). The end result, it seems, is the promise in the Nyay Patra for a law on civil unions for LGBTQ+ couples. Here too, the Congress stopped short of guaranteeing marriage (civil unions are not the same as marriages).

It is also rather odd that the Congress party promises passing a new law on civil unions even before starting the consultative process and prematurely foreclosing the possibility of recognising LGBTQ+ marriages (civil unions are not the same as marriages). As Mr. Ramesh pointed out earlier, the Congress has, in his opinion, always been "a party of inclusion.. that firmly believes in non-discriminatory processes." If that is the case, how can the exclusion of LGBTQ+ couples from the institution of marriage, yet again, sit in accordance with the Congress's own purported principles of non-discrimination and inclusion?

Even the CPI(M) general election manifesto contains a promise for legally recognising and protecting same-sex couples' rights in a form "similar to marriage" – but not the same as marriage. LGBTQ+ couples, it seems have "partial allies" among the Opposition and no allies within the ruling BJP on this issue.

A subject in the concurrent list

If opinion polls are anything to go by, the BJP is projected to win comfortably in the general election. That said, State governments still have a lot of latitude to pass laws favourable to LGBTQ+ couples. Just as Uttarakhand became the first State in independent India to implement a Uniform Civil Code, one that not only excludes LGBTQ+ couples from its ambit but also criminalises non-disclosure of live-in relationships among heterosexual couples, so too could State governments pass progressive laws recognising LGBTQ+ couples and expanding state benefits to them.

No State in India, including those governed by Opposition parties, has done this so far. Marriage and divorce, after all, fall in the concurrent list of the Indian Constitution, meaning that both State and central governments have latitude to pass laws on this subject.

While it is significant that the Congress and the CPI(M) have added LGBTQ+ rights to their manifestos, their half-hearted approach defies their liberal credentials and begs the question whether they genuinely care about LGBTQ+ rights or are just queer-baiting, trying to woo the LGBTQ+ vote by handing out breadcrumbs instead of the actual pie.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Poll bond scheme

The top leader of the land viewing every development in the nation through a political and partisan spectrum is strange. It does not behove his stature to be still singing paeans about the electoral bonds scheme even after the top court of the land deemed the scheme to be unconstitutional (Inside pages, April 19). If the leader was so confident about the scheme's 'fine traits', and it being in the best interests of India, why has he not sought to focus on it in a big way in the run-up to the election?

P.K. Sharma,
Barnala, Punjab

PM's visits, CM's remark

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister is quite right in saying that the frequent visits by the Prime Minister to the south "are to make up for [electoral] loss in North" (April 16).

One hopes that the election results in the south are akin to the "four balls twenty runs" of M.S. Dhoni in the match against Mumbai Indians, which paved the way for a "twenty runs" victory for CSK.

M.C. Vijay Shankar,
Chennai

The issue of 'health'

Though the Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre is implementing a bouquet of health plans, such as Ayushman Bharat, it appears to be piecemeal and useful only in the case of major illnesses. They appear to be time-consuming to avail in times of an emergency. Instead, the government must expand its health services manifold to cover every health need of the common man so that his "out of pocket" medical expenses are minimal. None of the political parties has felt this to be a necessity to mention or include in their manifesto. There only seems to be a pitch for freebies. As for the 'continuity pitch' by the ruling BJP, there seems to be no other political option for the electorate as the INDIA bloc is not united. There will only be uncertainty and instability if it is elected. There needs to be a good, strong and reliable political alternative.

V.H. Subramoney,
Bengaluru

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Navigating life as a consumer with disability

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Every year, March 15 is celebrated as World Consumer Rights Day to create awareness about the rights of consumers. One section of consumers who might remain invisible in these celebrations or even in the discourse around consumer rights is consumers with disabilities.

Imagine yourself in the place of a person with visual impairment heading to the supermarket to buy a toaster. You start by booking a cab ride through a mobile app, but since the app is not accessible, you seek external help to book the ride. At the supermarket, there are no tactile pavements in the building, so you seek external help to reach the electronic appliance section and buy a toaster. When you reach home, you realise the toaster is defective and try to contact the customer support of the toaster company. But since the contact details are printed on the outer pack, you seek external help to read them. Discovering that the company only accepts written complaints via postal mail, once again you seek external help to send a complaint to the company.

Every single day, persons with disabilities face this struggle of seeking help for the most basic human activities, and the consequent loss of dignity, independence, and privacy. The pervasive inaccessibility that they encounter as consumers not only undermines their right to lead an independent life but also prevents them from equally participating in society as others.

The potential change-makers

The situation discussed above highlights two major challenges for consumers with disabilities: the inaccessibility of goods and services and the inaccessibility of customer support options. This brings us to the most pertinent question: who bears responsibility for this rampant inaccessibility? Rather, who has the capacity to enhance the consumer experience of persons with disabilities?

Businesses could be a starting point. Businesses generally don't perceive persons with disabilities as their target consumers. This is evidenced by their inaccessible offerings, which are typically designed for 'mainstream' consumers. In India, persons with disabilities account for 5-8% of the population (World Bank, 2009). Therefore, if not out of generosity, businesses could consider making their offerings accessible just to broaden their customer reach.

Another entity capable of making a difference is the government. The gap in sensitisation among businesses can be abridged through effective policy measures. For example, FSSAI in October 2023 issued an advisory to all food business operators for incorporating QR codes containing product information on all food products. This simple yet effective step will allow people with visual impairment to ascertain crucial product information on their own. While transformative, this measure is limited to one type of product. The government could consider bringing comprehensive accessibility guidelines for all goods and services. India can build on the lessons from the initiatives in countries such as Australia, the U.S., and Canada and integrate similar strategies into its policies.

Legal reforms

Persons with disabilities are also empowered by laws that safeguard their rights and interests as consumers. The primary legislation in this regard is the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWDA), 2016, which grants a bouquet of rights including the rights to equality, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation. In particular, the Act includes provisions for universally designed consumer goods and accessible services (Sections 43 and 46). The Rules notified under the RPWDA also require all Information and Communications Technology (ICT) goods and services to be accessible in accordance with the BIS standards laid down by the government. In case of a violation of these rights, a consumer with disability can file a complaint with the Disability Commissions established under the Act. For example, following a complaint by one of us (Rahul), the well-known healthcare service provider Practo was directed to make its website and application accessible. Similarly, complaints regarding accessibility barriers in services such as banking, insurance, and hospitality have also been filed. However, Disability Commissions only issue recommendatory directions. So, they often fail to provide effective redress.

Another avenue is the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), 2019, which not only details various consumer rights but also empowers Consumer Commissions to impose penalties and award compensation against consumer complaints. Consumers with disabilities have successfully obtained such remedies in numerous cases brought before Consumer Commissions. For example, in *S. Suresh v. The Manager i/c, Gokulam Cinemas*, a person with locomotor disability who encountered inaccessibility at a cinema hall was awarded a compensation of ₹1,00,000.

Unlike the RPWDA, the CPA has strong enforcement and compliance mechanisms. However, it lacks any dedicated rights for consumers with disabilities contrary to the RPWDA, which may deter them from filing complaints with Consumer Commissions. Hence, it becomes imperative to align the CPA with the RPWDA.

In addition to these legal reforms, it is crucial to raise awareness about the existing rights and resources available to consumers with disabilities under the two chief legislations. While consumer awareness has been a key focus of the state, particularly with the launch of the flagship Jago Grahak Jago Campaign, consumers with disabilities have never received attention.

A collaborative effort between businesses and the government, supported by a robust legal framework, is imperative to effectively protect the rights of consumers with disabilities and afford them an equal opportunity to participate in the marketplace and society

The importance of Madigas

Political parties are taking calculated decisions and risks to win the Madiga vote

STATE OF PLAY

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The rivalry between the Malas and Madigas, sub-castes among the Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Telangana, has come to the fore yet again after political parties, especially the Congress, announced candidates for the general elections.

The Madigas constitute 59.52% of the SCs in the State, whereas the Malas constitute 28.11%. But when the Congress announced its candidates for the three SC reserved parliamentary constituencies in Telangana - Peddapalli, Nagarkurnool, and Warangal – there was no Madiga name on the list.

The Congress seems to have taken a calculated risk by naming two Mala candidates for the Nagarkurnool and Peddapalli seats, which have Madiga voters in sizeable numbers. Dr. Mallu Ravi, Special Representative of the State government in New Delhi, is the Congress candidate from Nagarkurnool. He is the elder brother of Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka.

Gaddam Vamshi Krishna, an industrialist, is testing his political fortunes from the Peddapalli Lok Sabha seat, which was once represented by his grandfather and former Union Minister, Gaddam Venkataswamy, and father, Dr. Gaddam Vivekananda.

For the Warangal seat, the Congress has chosen Dr. Kadiyam Kavya, daughter of senior Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Kadiyam Srihari. Ms. Kavya, who switched to the grand old party last month much to the chagrin of the BRS, belongs to the non-Madiga-Bandla community.

The Congress argues that it has chosen candidates based on their winnability and popularity. But this has not cut much ice with the Madigas, who are upset at what they see as a complete side-lining of the community.

Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the BRS have allotted tickets to Madiga candidates and are trying to project the government led by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy as "anti-Madiga".

Though it did not announce candidates from the community, the ruling party has begun to woo a section of influential Madiga leaders. This could assuage the anger to an extent. In March, Satish Madiga, one of the key members of the Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti (MRPS), left the BJP to join the Congress. The MRPS has been claiming that Malas, who are numerically strong in Andhra Pradesh and numerically weaker compared to the Madigas in Telangana, have cornered the benefits of SC reservation in education and employment. They believe that the answer to this "disparity" is SC sub-categorisation.

The BJP is banking on MRPS founder Manda Krishna Madiga, who supports the party from outside, to help it win votes. Last November, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended a rally of Madigas in Hyderabad where he announced the constitution of a Cabinet sub-committee to expedite the sub-categorisation of SCs. He also consoled a teary-eyed Manda Krishna Madiga on stage. But the outcome of the 2023 Assembly polls showed that the announcement and gesture did not find much favour with the electorate; Congress candidates won 14 out of the 19 SC seats by huge margins and nine Scheduled Tribe (ST) seats. While some Congress Madiga leaders say Mr. Manda Krishna Madiga holds some influence in the community, they don't believe that this will translate into votes for the BJP.

The BJP is once again egging on Mr. Manda Krishna Madiga to rake up the sub-categorisation issue but it is unlikely that it will benefit from the campaign this time too. However, given Mr. Manda Krishna Madiga's changing stances on issues and his unpredictable political position, political parties, particularly the Congress and the BRS, are wary of his moves.

The BRS, which lost the Assembly polls mainly due to defections and the arrest of MLC K. Kavitha, is desperately trying to keep its flock together. It has managed to woo Dr. R.S. Praveen Kumar, who was Bahujan Samaj Party State president and is now the BRS candidate from the Nagarkurnool constituency. Mr. Kumar, a Madiga, enjoys the goodwill of Dalits. He worked as an IPS officer and later as Secretary of the Telangana State Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions.

This election, ignoring the Madigas could affect the prospects of the Congress. It is equally a challenge for the floundering BRS to attract votes from the group. Whether the BJP's caste card will help it perform better remains to be seen.

RBI survey shows why livelihood issues are in focus in 2024 polls

Close to 72% said income levels have decreased or stayed the same, while 90% said price levels have increased

DATA POINT

The Hindu Data Team

The findings of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s consumer confidence survey, conducted in March in urban areas, on concerns regarding livelihood are similar to the findings of the CSDS-Lokniti pre-poll survey, published in these pages.

One major conclusion of the CSDS-Lokniti pre-poll survey was that while the NDA has an edge over the Opposition in the run up to the Lok Sabha elections, issues such as inflation, unemployment, and falling income levels are major election issues this time.

In the pre-poll survey, 32% of the respondents chose 'increasing unemployment' as the reason for not electing the incumbent government. The other two reasons in the list of top three reasons were 'price rise' (cited by 20% of the respondents) and 'falling income' (cited by 11% of them). 'Price rise' and 'increasing unemployment' also featured as the top two 'least popular initiatives' of the government.

The RBI's latest survey, conducted between March 2 and 1th 8 among 6,083 respondents across 19 major cities, shows similar concerns among urban consumers.

Chart 1 shows the share of respondents in the RBI survey who said employment opportunities have improved and those who said they have worsened compared to a year-ago period. Close to 38% of the respondents said the job outlook has worsened. A similar share said it has improved compared to a year-ago period. The rest said the outlook remained the same (not plotted in the graph).

These numbers should be read keeping in mind that the comparisons are from a low-base (the year-ago period), when consumer confidence was still recovering after the pandemic. While confidence about job opportunities are now closer to pre-pandemic levels, close to one-third are pessimistic about employment scenarios. These findings concur with the results of the pre-poll survey.

Chart 2 shows the share of respondents in the RBI survey who said income levels have improved and those who said they have worsened compared to a year-ago period. Confidence about income levels is still recovering since the pandemic. Close to 22% of the respondents said income levels have decreased compared to a year-ago. This is higher than the 10% in 2014-15. Close to 27% said income levels have increased. The rest, close to 50%, said income levels have remained the same. This is a pain point given that the prices of commodities are increasing every year.

Chart 3 shows the share of respondents in the RBI survey who said the price levels of commodities have improved and those who said they have worsened compared to a year-ago period. Close to 90% of the respondents continued to say price levels of items have increased compared to the year before. A mere 1% said they have decreased; and 9% said they have stayed the same.

When Chart 2 and Chart 3 are read together (with 72% saying income levels have decreased or have stayed the same and with 90% saying price levels have increased, both from a year-ago period), it is understandable why these two became the main talking points in the CSDS-Lokniti pre-poll survey.

Chart 4 shows the share of respondents in the RBI survey who said the general economic situation has improved and those who said it has worsened compared to a year-ago period. The confidence levels about the economy are back to pre-pandemic levels. However, it must be noted that the economy had technically entered recession in 2019. Confidence levels are still not back to the 2015-17 levels, as 36% in March 2024 said the economy had worsened from a year-ago period.

Chart 1: The chart shows respondents' views on employment opportunities compared to a year-ago period

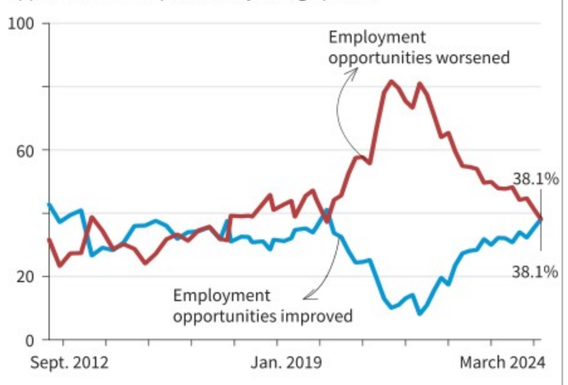


Chart 3: The chart shows respondents' views on price levels of commodities compared to a year-ago period

Chart 2: The chart shows respondents' views on income levels compared to a year-ago period

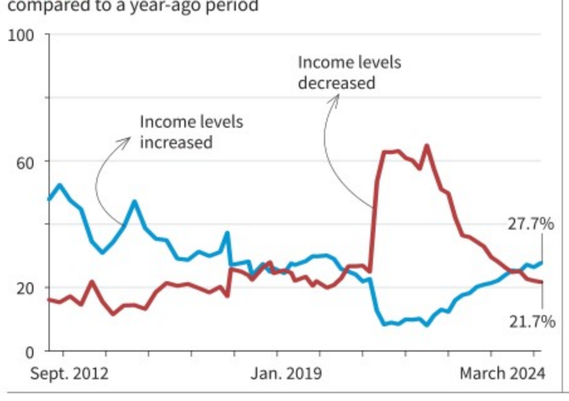
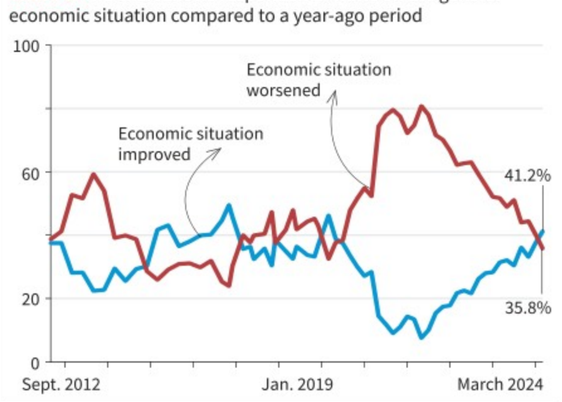


Chart 4: The chart shows respondents' views on the general economic situation compared to a year-ago period



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 17, 1974

Anti-defection Bill: Palkhivala's criticism

Madras, April 16: Dr. N.A. Palkhivala, eminent Constitutional lawyer, to-day appealed to the people of Tamil Nadu to fight against certain features of the Anti-Defection Bill, which he described as a "monstrous outrage on the Constitution."

The Bill which sought to amend the Constitution would curtail the freedom to vote and the best way to commemorate Rajaji's memory was to resist it till the very end, he said, inaugurating the Rajaji Memorial Lectures organised by the Mylapore Academy. The most objectionable feature of the Bill was that any Member of Parliament or a State legislature who did not vote according to the instruction of his party whip would lose his membership of the House. This would curtail the freedom of voting and prevent a member from following the dictates of his conscience.

Mr. Palkhivala said Rajaji's outstanding achievement was to give a momentum to the principle of rule of law which was essential if democracy and freedom were to survive. To him, the basic freedoms were even more important than the democratic form of government and he had pointed out that a tyrannical law would not cease to be tyrannical merely because it was passed by the elected representatives of the people.

As an administrator Rajaji had few equals. He was a genuine socialist who lived a simple life and did not, as many in power now did, speak of his love for the poor in public while he himself lived a life of luxury. He was completely disenchanted with populist economic policies which went by the name of socialism but had no foundation in economics.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 17, 1924

U.S.A. immigration Bill

New York, April 15: The morning newspapers commenting on the restriction at Japanese immigration into the United States condemn the action of Congress. The "Times" declares it is a wholly uncalled for affront to the Japanese people. The "New York World" calls the measure offensive, foolish, unnecessary, brutal and dangerous and says that it does not represent the real will of the American people. The country will expect the President to save it by his veto from the consequences of folly.

From Page One

29 Maoists shot dead at Kanker in Chhattisgarh

A BSF statement issued earlier said the anti-Naxal operation was launched late in the evening of April 15 by the District Reserve Guard and the Border Security Force, based on various inputs of Maoists' movement. "We shared five inputs, including two inputs giving exact location (one input with GR also) of the North Bastar DVC Maoists in the Binagunda area, underlining the fact that it has acted as a permanent camp of the Maoists since April," the statement added.

Mr. Sundarraj said the operation had been launched after receiving information about the presence of North Bastar and Abujhmad Committee division committee members such as Shankar, Lalita, Raju and others, but noted that the police would be able to confirm names and profiles only after the identification of the bodies.

Ever since the State's new BJP government was sworn in, the anti-Naxal campaign in Chhattisgarh has intensified. Since the beginning of this year, 79 Maoists have been killed by the security forces. This is the highest tally since 2019, when 80 Maoists were killed in the whole year, according to data shared by the police.

"Due to the offensive policy of the government and the efforts of the security forces, Naxalism has been confined to a small area today. Soon Chhattisgarh and the entire country will be completely Naxal-free," Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in a post on X. "I congratulate all the security personnel who made this operation successful with their bravery," he added.

Ramdev, associate apologise before SC

The hearing began with the Bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah summoning Mr. Ramdev and Mr. Balkrishna to the courtroom.

Justice Kohli addressed Ramdev and said the court was aware of his work in the field of yoga. The Bench, however, asked him why he had continued to advertise his herbal medicines despite the Centre recommending an investigation against them under the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act.

The court had said the advertisements of Patanjali Ayurved, which promised to cure everything from diabetes and obesity to liver dysfunction and even COVID-19 during the months of pandemic, were "deliberate and wilful violations" of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act of 1954 and its Rules.

The judges questioned him as to why he had held a press conference, that too a day after giving an undertaking in the Supreme Court that they would refrain from advertising "cures" in violation of the 1954 Act. Justice Kohli asked Mr. Ramdev whether it was right to point the finger against other fields of medicine, including allopathy, and claim his company's medicines were far superior to them. Justice Kohli said it was "irresponsible behaviour" on his part to make such claims when a large number of people looked up to him.

At one point, the yoga guru admitted that he might have been carried away at some point with his claims. He folded his hands in apology to the Supreme Court, saying he would be prudent in future. Mr. Balkrishna echoed the yoga guru saying he had realised his faults. He said it was lack of knowledge on his part.

X takes down four posts on EC order

However, these posts are visible from non-Indian Internet connections.

This is the first time that X is proactively disclosing a takedown notice from India to the public since April 2023, when it stopped publishing summaries of such orders.

The EC has issued such orders in the past to X, which have been disclosed and reported in the media; however, subsequent disclosures for government takedowns around the world come selectively through the handle of X's global affairs team. In the current batch of orders, the poll body has cited a prohibition on campaigners targeting their rivals' personal lives while politicking.

The YSR Congress's post was not available on Tuesday evening, indicating that the party has chosen to delete the post. Telugu Desam Party leader N. Chandrababu Naidu's post featured a purported document from the Central Bureau of Investigation, where he says the agency "seized a staggering 25,000 kilos of drugs at Vizag Port, today," and that "non-cooperation of AP Police and port employees suggests complicity and point to the potential involvement of the ruling party." The TDP is in the Opposition in Andhra Pradesh.

The AAP's post features a headline from the online news portal *The Quint*, which reads, "ED Arrested Aurobindo Pharma's Director. 5 Days Later, It Bought Electoral Bonds." The party added a caption saying "Bond Chor [thief]," over an image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi edited to redden his eyes and superimpose a pose by actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui from the poster of the film *Raman Raghav 2.0*, where the actor plays a serial killer.

The final tweet takedown was from the account of Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and BJP member Samrat Choudhary, who in a video and tweet said that RJD president Lalu Prasad was a "seasoned player" in selling tickets for elections. Mr. Choudhary added a remark that Mr. Prasad "did not even spare his daughter" and "took a kidney from her and then gave a ticket."

SC says EVMs are accurate unless they are maligned by human bias

Rejecting the idea of a return to paper ballots, Bench says electoral process in the country is a humongous task and there must be no attempt to bring down the system; hearing on cross-verification of votes with VVPAT slips to be held tomorrow

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday disagreed with the idea of a return to paper ballots to restore the "little man's" confidence in the electoral process, saying machines give "absolutely accurate results" unless human bias maligns them.

"Human weaknesses, including bias, may lead to a problem. Machines without human intervention would give absolutely accurate results," Justice Sanjiv Khanna, heading a two-judge Bench, observed.

The court was open to the testing of the "actual performance" of electronic voting machines (EVMs). It said the review should be wholly based on data provided by the Election Commission, and not opinion garnered from private quarters.

The court fixed the hearing on Thursday (April 18). The Bench, also comprising Justice Dipankar Datta, rejected the idea of returning to paper ballots. "We are in our sixties... We have seen in our lives what happened when it was ballot papers. We have seen the drawbacks of the past," Justice Khanna said.

The court has said that it is open to a review of the actual performance of EVMs, based on Election Commission data. AFP

The court was hearing separate petitions filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and by Arun Kumar Agarwal highlighting the voter's fundamental right to information about his vote. The petitioner clarified they were not attributing malice to the EVMs. Their only issue was that the EVM system did not provide voters with confirmation or confidence about their votes. The VVPAT (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail) machine showed the slip only for seven seconds, after the vote was cast.

"I am not talking about the urbane voter in this courtroom. I am talking about the queues of multitudes who are hustled into the polling booths to press a button and hustled out, not knowing what really happened. Leaving aside the foibles about the past regarding ballot papers, that system had at least given the little man confidence that he had put his little cross across the right party symbol," senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, for Mr. Agarwal, submitted. "I am unable to confirm my vote. My physical contact with my vote has gone completely," Mr. Sankaranarayanan said.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan said the voter leaves the booth with no sense of accuracy. Mr. Bhushan suggested three options – revert to paper ballots, give VVPAT paper slips to voters for them to put in the ballot box and finally to make VVPAT screens transparent glass rather than opaque, as it was now.

The petitioners have also sought 100% cross verification of VVPAT slips with EVM votes count. They said while the government had spent nearly ₹5,000 crore to purchase nearly 24 lakh VVPATs, only slips from approximately 20,000 VVPATs could be verified. They have referred to a judgment of the top court in 2013 in *Subramanian Swamy v. Election Commission of India* that the election process should "have fullest transparency in the system and to restore the confidence of the voters".

Mr. Bhushan noted that European countries like Germany had gone back to paper ballots. Justice Datta said there were 98 crore registered voters in India compared to the six crore population in Germany. "This [elections in India] is a humongous task. My home State, West Bengal, is more populated than Germany. You have to repose some trust in somebody. Of course they [Election Commission] are accountable... Some dotting of the 'i' and ticking of the 't' can happen, but do not try to bring down the system," Justice Datta said.

Justice Khanna said candidates could exercise their right if they found a discrepancy between the total votes cast and votes counted.

"If we are to look into whether EVMs are functioning well, we have to go by data. We need data on the number of votes polled and the number counted. Any discrepancies in the past. How much discrepancy was there. On how many instances candidates requested counting... They (Election Commission) can provide the data," Justice Khanna said.

Satisfied with compliance of model code by parties: EC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A month after announcing the Lok Sabha election, the Election Commission of India (EC) reviewed implementation of the model code of conduct (MCC) here on Tuesday and said it was "broadly satisfied" with the compliance of the code by political parties. In a statement, the EC said the campaign by various parties and candidates had remained "largely clutter-free".

The poll panel said it has decided to keep under strict watch some disturbing trends and to keep special track of certain "deviant" candidates, leaders, and practices more than ever before. It said since the announcement of the election, the EC has taken "swift and salutary action" to ensure that the level playing field is not disturbed. The EC said 16 delegations from seven political parties met the panel to lodge complaints on alleged violations of MCC. "Approximately 200 complaints have been filed at the level of EC and across States. Action has been taken in 169 cases," the panel said.

3 vehicles of Assam Rifles ambushed by militants

The Hindu Bureau
TINSUKIA

Three vehicles of the paramilitary Assam Rifles were ambushed in eastern Assam's Tinsukia district on Tuesday morning by unknown assailants. An Army spokesperson said one person received gunshot wounds in the attack, which the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom-Independent (ULFA-I) claimed to have carried out near Namdang.

The ambush took place less than 24 hours after Home Minister Amit Shah said the BJP-led government at the Centre had signed more than 10 peace accords with extremist groups in the northeast to ensure lasting peace.

The ULFA(I) claimed that the ambush ahead of PM Narendra Modi's roadshow in Guwahati was part of its 'Operation *Pratisodh* (revenge)' in the memory of two of its fighters killed by the armed forces recently.

Police are recording mob lynching cases as brawls, accidents: plea

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday heard a petitioner's contention that mob lynching incidents are recorded by the police in certain States as brawls or accidents.

Appearing before a three-judge Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai, advocate Nizam Pasha, representing the petitioner, the National Federation of Women, claimed that this was a deliberate ploy by authorities to skirt their responsibility under the court's Tehseen Poonawala judgment.

That 2018 judgment had issued a series of guidelines to the States and their police forces to take steps to prevent communal violence and lynchings. The court had directed the police to register first information reports (FIRs) and prosecute the perpetrators without delay.

The petition submitted that there has been an

"alarming rise in cases of lynchings and mob violence against Muslims".

Senior advocate Archana Pathak Dave, appearing for the Gujarat government, alleged that the petition was biased and covered only incidents in which Muslims were the victims.

Justice Sandeep Mehta, on the Bench, said that a debate on lynching should not take on communal colours. The court said that such acts of violence were crimes regardless of the faith of the perpetrators or the victims.

The court gave States six weeks to file their responses to the petition.

Will hold 96 recruitment rallies this year: Army

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

The Army is scheduled to to carry out 96 recruitment rallies across the country in the fiscal year 2024-25 for recruitment of Agniveers. Eleven of the rallies will be exclusively for the selection of women Agniveers into the Corps of the Military Police.

"The Army has scheduled an online combined entrance examination that will span 174 locations nationwide. The examination window, set from April 22 to May 7 is expected to witness participation from an unprecedented 12.8 lakh registered candidates," an Army official said.

The entrance examination would be followed by physical and medical examination, after which shortlisted candidates would be declared.

Agniveers, on completion of four years, will get an opportunity to join the regular cadre and up to 25% would be taken in.

'Escalation of tension between Iran, Israel may affect oil prices'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has expressed fear that any further escalation in the tension between Iran and Israel may have big consequences for India as it may push up oil prices. In an informal interaction with mediapersons in Bengaluru on Tuesday, Mr. Jaishankar observed that any escalation of the Middle East tension would translate to an increase in import costs, shipping costs, insurance costs and energy costs besides pushing up oil prices

There is pressure from the rest of the world, including the U.S., on Israel to desist from escalating matters with Iran. At the same time, there was pressure from within Israel to respond to the attack by Iran, he pointed out.

"My sense is that in the next few days we see how the pressure from rest of the world and pressure from within Israel will play out," he said.

He also ruled out the possibility of any increase in oil prices impacting the Lok Sabha elections, by indicating that it may take some time for any such escalation in tension to trigger an increase in oil prices. "We are looking at months and not weeks. I don't think it will have any impact on polls," he said.

India aims to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

India has made a declaration to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S. Somanath made the declaration on April 16, at the 42nd Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) annual meet.

"This initiative aims to achieve debris-free space missions by all Indian space actors, governmental and non-governmental, by 2030. India encourages all state space actors to follow this initiative for long-term sustainability of outer space. "It is one of the intent or initiative of India to ensure that debris-free space missions are conducted so as to ensure the sustainability of space. I would like to make this initiative a declaration today, this can be discussed and debated in the coming days," Mr. Somanath said.

ISRO has a very clearly laid out plan as far as space exploration and space utilisation is concerned.

Amid heightened Iran-Israel tensions, U.S. NSA Sullivan puts off visit to India

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

As tensions between Israel and Iran grow, U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan cancelled his plan to travel to Delhi for talks, officials announced on Tuesday.

Mr. Sullivan, who was going to lead a delegation to hold an annual review of the India-U.S. initiative for Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET), was also expected to be accompanied by the U.S.'s second-most senior diplomat, Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell, and was due to land in Delhi on Tuesday ahead of talks with NSA Ajit Doval and other officials, including External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday. The talks were expected to closely follow Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra's visit to Washington on April 10-12, and would have been the highest level visit since the U.S. filed charges in the alleged assassination plot against Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, which implicate Indian security officials.

Jake Sullivan

"Due to ongoing events in the Middle East, NSA Sullivan has postponed his trip to India this week," the U.S. Embassy spokesperson announced on Tuesday, indicating it was a last-minute decision necessitated by renewed fears of conflict in the region.

"NSA Sullivan looks forward to holding the iCET annual review at the next earliest possible date and remains personally committed to advancing our deeply consequential and multifaceted partnership with India," he added.

This is the second time this year that Mr. Sullivan has put off plans to come to Delhi. He had earlier planned to hold iCET review talks and discuss other bilateral issues in February this year, but that visit was also put off due to tensions in West Asia, and talks around a possible Israel-Hamas ceasefire that did not fructify.

Briefing the media ahead of the planned trip, a senior White House Administration official had said that during his visit Mr. Sullivan's planned to "to celebrate elements of [the India-U.S.] bilateral relationship, compare notes on the Indo-Pacific, and also talk about the next steps in technology cooperation", and hoped to take ties "to the next level".

The Sullivan-Campbell visit was also expected to take forward the Quad process, which is at an impasse at present due to election cycles in India and the U.S.

APPEAL

I am **Chandra** aged 47 years, a widow selling fruits for my living. I am suffering from Heart Ailment and advised to undergo Complex Open Heart Surgery at The Madras Medical Mission, Chennai. The total expenditure is **Rs. 3,50,000/-**. My family is very poor and cannot afford this huge cost. Kindly donate and help me to lead a healthy and normal life. The donations sent through Ch/D.D/NEFT Transfer & Google Pay (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C. No:60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through **WWS,** Regd Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No.GF1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/7338978027. E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com.** Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.

Chandra

ELECTIONS 2024

Stop Congress's guarantee drive: BJP urges EC

The BJP on Tuesday accused the Congress of indulging in corrupt practices amounting to bribery through its 'Ghar Ghar Guarantee' outreach programme and has asked the Election Commission to put a stop to it.

The BJP said the initiative was unveiled on April 3 and that Congress workers were distributing "guarantee cards" to households, presenting them application papers for accessing the party's promised benefits.

The BJP claimed that this was tantamount to manipulation of voters' trust and misrepresentation of guarantee cards as legitimate instruments for accessing promised "freebies, largesse and utopian promises".

It sought registration of cases against members distributing the cards.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge with the guarantee card during a campaign. ANI

In Jammu, Shah raises issue of 'fake encounters'

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who is campaigning in Jammu, on Tuesday targeted the National Conference, the Peoples Democratic Party, and the Congress, and flagged the issue of fake encounters during their regimes.

Accusing the three parties of "promoting terrorism" in J&K, he said, "I want to ask the NC, the PDP, and Dr. Farooq Abdullah, in whose tenure most of the fake encounters took place?"

He highlighted the change in ground situation after the abrogation of Article 370. "Terrorism is on its deathbed. Stone pelting, shutdown calls, and street protests are a history. Prime Minister Modi has handed over laptops in the hands of youth, who carried stones once. This is the change we have brought in Kashmir," Mr. Shah said.

> Where is Nitish Kumar*ji*? Why is the BJP not inviting him to its rallies? He could not be seen at the rallies of the Prime Minister on Tuesday
>
> **TEJASHWI YADAV**
> RJD leader

Surjewala barred from campaigning

The EC has barred Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala from holding any public meetings, interviews, and making public utterances in media for a period of 48 hours starting Tuesday evening. The is after his remarks on Hema Malini, the BJP candidate for Mathura.

> Kashmir has been turned into an open jail. No one is allowed to express herself. There is enforced silence. It's this silence we need to end
>
> **MEHBOOBA MUFTI**
> PDP president

Home voting turns into a health camp in remote villages of Arunachal

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Gida Yajik, a nonagenarian, does not remember when she last voted or visited a doctor for treatment miles away from home in Pania village of Arunachal Pradesh's Kra-Daadi district.

On April 15, the 92-year-old experienced both – voting and healthcare – at home.

Sending a medical team along with polling personnel to provide home voting service to geriatric electors and persons with disabilities was a last-minute decision by the district's Deputy Commissioner and Election Officer Sunny K. Singh.

The medical team comprising nursing officer Takhe Manju, ophthalmic assistant Koj Minu, and laboratory technician Ajay Singh tagged along with the election team under the presumption that the targeted home voters might not have had access to healthcare in recent times.

Age a stumbling block

As it turned out, Ms. Yajik stopped going to the nearest primary health centre (PHC) in Palin, the district headquarters located 13 km from her village, decades ago. Terrain and advancing age were the primary factors for this decision.

"She was partially blind due to cataract and it was difficult for her to even move from one spot to another in the same room," Hibu Kapi, Tali Circle Officer and the district's nodal officer for postal ballots, told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

Similarly, 87-year-old Techi Yaya of Rissi village, 21 km from Palin, and 88-year-old Dari Roru of Dari village, 33 km from Palin, were found to have turned almost blind due to cataracts.

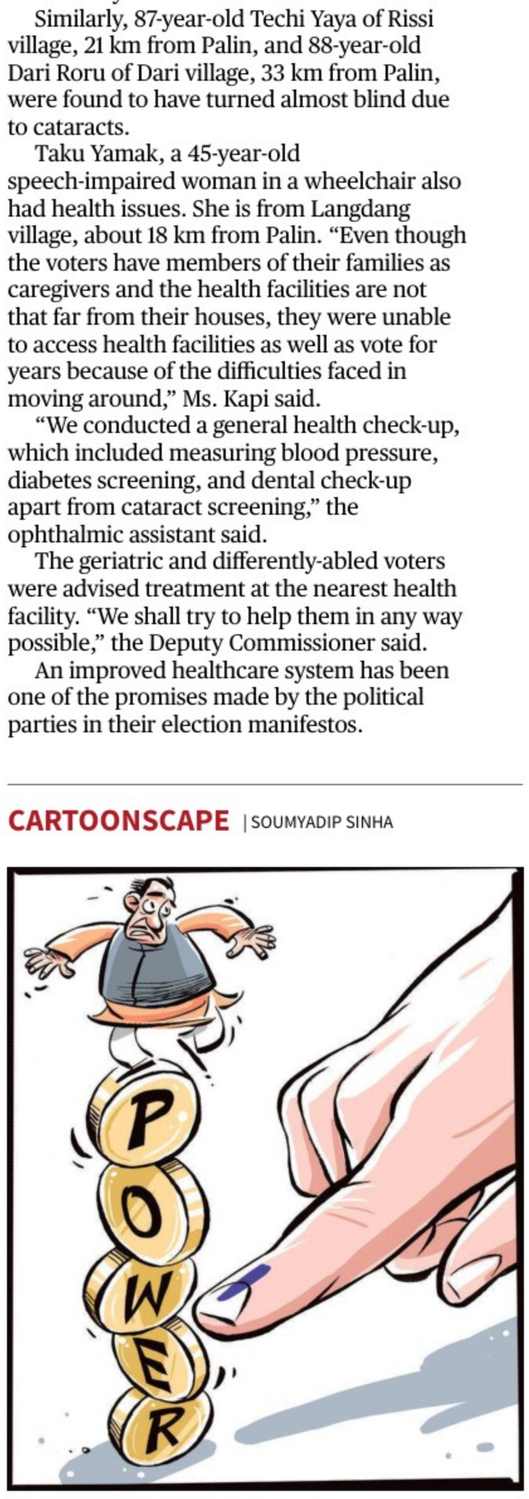
Taku Yamak, a 45-year-old speech-impaired woman in a wheelchair also had health issues. She is from Langdang village, about 18 km from Palin. "Even though the voters have members of their families as caregivers and the health facilities are not that far from their houses, they were unable to access health facilities as well as vote for years because of the difficulties faced in moving around," Ms. Kapi said.

"We conducted a general health check-up, which included measuring blood pressure, diabetes screening, and dental check-up apart from cataract screening," the ophthalmic assistant said.

The geriatric and differently-abled voters were advised treatment at the nearest health facility. "We shall try to help them in any way possible," the Deputy Commissioner said.

An improved healthcare system has been one of the promises made by the political parties in their election manifestos.

CARTOONSCAPE | SOUMYADIP SINHA



Tea, identity politics dominate first phase of polling in Bengal

The BJP had won Cooch Behar, Alipurduar, and Jalpaiguri in 2019, but faces a stiff challenge from Trinamool; Congress and the Left are also in the fray in the region; minimum wages for tea garden workers, land ownership in estates are key issues

OVERVIEW

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The economic woes of the tea gardens and their workers, and the identity politics of the Rajbangshi community are likely to be key issues determining the choices of voters in three constituencies along the northern fringes of West Bengal which will go to the polls in the first phase on April 19.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had won all three seats – Cooch Behar, Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri – in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, but the Trinamool Congress has gained considerable ground since then and is now posing a stiff challenge in the region. Campaigning for the first phase ends on Wednesday.

Rajbangshi community

In Cooch Behar, the BJP has fielded Nisith Pramanik, whose rise from a deputy pradhan in the town of Dinhata to Union Minister of State for Home Affairs in the national capital has marked one of the steepest ascents in West Bengal politics.

While the BJP MP is banking on his charisma, the Trinamool Congress is highlighting the criminal cases against him and his long absence from his constituency.

Given that 40% of Cooch Behar's voters are from the Rajbangshi community, their identity issues are also crucial to the constituency. Previously, tensions in the area boiled over their demands for a separate State of Greater Cooch Behar. In August 2023, the BJP nominated Nagendra Roy alias Ananta Maharaj to the Rajya Sabha to win the support of the community. Now, for the Lok Sabha election, the Trinamool is keeping its hopes alive as another Rajbangshi leader Bangshi Badan Barman has put his weight behind their candidate, Jagadish Chandra Basunia.

The district is also home to thousands of people who lived in a series of erstwhile enclaves along the India-Bangladesh border, and who became Indian citizens only after the historic exchange of enclaves between the two countries in 2015. They hope their pending issues will be resolved after the Lok Sabha election.

Distress in the estates

In Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri, political discourse is dominated by the distress prevailing in the tea estates that produce 60% of the State's tea. Of the 150 large tea gardens in the region, 18 have shut down. The implementation of minimum wages for tea garden workers, and issues relating to ownership of the land in the tea estates are critical.

In both Alipurduar and Coochbedhar, the contest is between an MP and an MLA representing the region. Despite the fact that John Barla won the Alipurduar Lok Sabha seat in 2019 by a margin of over 2.5 lakh votes, the BJP has dropped the sitting MP and instead fielded the Madarihat MLA Manoj Tigga, who is also its chief whip in the West Bengal Assembly. The Trinamool Congress has fielded its Rajya Sabha MP Prakash Chandra Barik for the seat, which is reserved for the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community, setting up a battle between two popular leaders.

In the adjoining Jalpaiguri district, it is the BJP's sitting MP Jayanta Roy who is pitted against the Trinamool's Dhupguri MLA Nirmal Chandra Roy. A political storm has erupted after a tornado in Jalpaiguri claimed five lives on April 2, with the ruling party claiming that it cannot rebuild the affected houses because of the Model Code of Conduct.

At his rallies in Cooch Behar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has targeted the Trinamool Congress on various fronts, from corruption allegations to the violence at Sandeshkhali in south Bengal, and the attacks against central agency officials allegedly by the latter's supporters.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who has campaigned extensively in the region, has accused the Centre and the local BJP MPs of not doing anything for the region, including the tea gardens.

Other candidates

The Left parties and the Congress have fielded candidates in these seats, as they do not have any seat-sharing agreement with the Trinamool in West Bengal despite them all being members of the Opposition Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc. In Cooch Behar, the Congress has fielded Piya Roy Chowdhury, while Nitish Chandra Roy is contesting as a candidate of the All India Forward Bloc, a constituent of the Left Front. Mili Oraon of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, another constituent of the Left Front, is contesting from Alipurduar, while the Communist Party of India (M)'s Debraj Barman is the joint candidate of the Left and the Congress in Jalpaiguri.

Battle for Bengal

A look at the results of the last two elections in three constituencies going to the polls in the first phase in West Bengal

Constituency	Party (winner)	Vote share	Party (runner-up)	Vote share
2019				
Alipurduar	BJP	54.4	TMC	36.72
Cooch Behar	BJP	47.98	TMC	44.43
Jalpaiguri	BJP	50.65	TMC	38.39
2014				
Alipurduar	TMC	29.62	RSP	27.87
Cooch Behar	TMC	39.51	AIFB	32.98
Jalpaiguri	TMC	38	CPM	32.65

Campaign spree: Mamata Banerjee during an election rally ahead of polls, in Siliguri. PTI

Trinamool is trying to stop Ram Navami rallies: Modi

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused the Trinamool Congress of preventing Ram Navami celebrations in West Bengal and termed the Calcutta High Court's ruling that allowed a Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) procession in Howrah as "victory of truth".

"Like always, Trinamool has tried to prevent Ram Navami celebrations here. They tried all the conspiracies. But the truth has emerged victorious. Court has given permission and tomorrow the processions of Ram Navami will begin," he said at a rally in Balurghat.

During the day, Mr. Modi addressed another rally in Raiganj, where he said that while the Trinamool tried to stop Ram Navami processions, those who threw stones at the processions had "full permission".

Past flare-ups

Ram Navami will be observed on Wednesday. There have been instances of communal flare-ups in the State during the festival over the past few years.

Reacting to Mr. Modi's remarks, Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said, "The BJP wants to use Lord Ram and religion for their political benefits while we want people's support based on the work we do [for them] day and night".

In Bastar, a newcomer is up against a Congress veteran

Shubhomoy Sikdar
JAGDALPUR

In life, and in politics, Kawasi Lakhma is a survivor. In his public meetings, the 70-year-old Congress candidate from the Bastar Lok Sabha constituency, and a six-time MLA from the Konta Assembly segment, reminds his audience about his longevity in politics.

"I became an MLA the last time, I will win the next time too. I will remain an MLA till the time I am alive. But will you make me an MP or not," he asks at one such public meeting in Jagdalpur city. In the Assembly election last November when nine Ministers of the erstwhile Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government lost, Mr. Lakhma was an exception although he scraped through by just 1,981 votes.

Having dubbed the election in Bastar as a "Narendra Modi versus Kawasi Lakhma contest" minutes ago, he also touches upon several issues – from deforestation to railway services and reservations to electoral bonds.

He says he will go to Delhi to raise Bastar's voice.

His speeches and rustic ways find more traction in the interior areas of his home constituency and areas like Bijapur.

But the electoral challenge is formidable though he is up against a relatively inexperienced Mahesh Kashyap of the BJP. In a battle that commentators are calling a close contest, Mr. Lakhma is also fighting recent electoral history, the organisational might and Hindutva consolidation attempts of the BJP.

Mr. Kashyap – a 49-year-old former sarpanch who has cut his teeth in the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal and has been picked as a candidate due to his contributions to the "anti-conversion" campaign according to party sources – plays down his lack of experience.

"Kawasi Lakhma will get to know after the June 4 [counting day] who is well known and who isn't? He thinks that his reckless statements will make him win. The BJP has trusted the son of a poor farmer like me and I have been travelling to all the districts and reaching out to voters," he says.

Interesting contest: BJP supporters at rally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Chhote Aamabal in Bastar district on April 8. PTI

Geographically and demographically, Bastar is quite diverse. It has a city like Jagdalpur, smaller mining townships, sparsely populated remote villages and areas under Maoist control.

BJP's challenges

For Mr. Kashyap, the challenge comes from the interior regions despite the BJP having won eight of the 12 seats in the Assembly election even as the party is on a stronger footing in the urban areas and villages closer to cities. The party hopes that the welfare measures such as the Mahtari Vandan Yojana introduced by the government will help it regain the seat that it lost to Congress State president Deepak Baij in 2019 after consecutive wins from 1998 to 2014.

Both the parties are vying hard to convince the voters that they have more to offer in terms of welfare measures. Mocking the BJP's Mahtari Vandan Yojana under which eligible married women receive ₹1,000 per month, Mr. Lakhma says it is not even sufficient to buy *gudakhu* (a tobacco preparation) and his party will provide ₹1 lakh annually with which women can buy "gold and two-wheelers for their husbands".

But the one issue that both the candidates agree on is railway facilities, or the lack of it, in the region.

"Railways are much needed in the region, better connectivity with Raipur and Hyderabad will create many opportunities for the youngsters of this region and with the Nagarnar Steel Plant, we can develop a city like Bhilai and Durg," says Ritesh Pandey, a retired government official, and a resident of Bastar district.

On other key issues, such as Maoist insurgency and the war against it, there is a sharp contrast in their approaches, especially in the light of an intensified campaign against the Maoist that has left over 50 alleged Maoists dead since the beginning of this year, the highest tally since 2020.

Mr. Lakhma has questioned these encounters. "In the name of Naxalism, tribals are being killed. I will fight the war to save the tribals in Delhi," he says.

The BJP accuses him of colluding with the Maoists and seeking their support to win elections. "Maoists have prospered under his protection and people are being denied the basic facilities, bringing a bad reputation for Bastar across the country," says Mr. Kashyap.

Strategic importance

Of the 11 constituencies in Chhattisgarh, Bastar is the only one which is going to the polls in the first phase on April 19. Yet, due to the strategic importance of the tribal region, the stakes are high enough for both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to hold a rally each here, reckon supporters. While Mr. Modi emphasised on welfare schemes and corruption allegations against his opponents, Mr. Gandhi, focussed more on 'jal, jungle, zameen' rights in his speech, besides the need for a nationwide caste census.

INBRIEF

Six dead as boat capsizes in Jhelum river following rains

Six people, including minors, were killed in a boat capsize incident in Srinagar on Tuesday, amid torrential rains in the past 24 hours in the Kashmir Valley. The incident took place between 7.45 a.m. to 8 a.m. at Gandbal in the Batwara area. The boat, used by the public to cross the river in the city, was carrying 15 people, including seven minors and eight adults, when it capsized apparently due to strong currents. "Twelve people were rescued in a joint operation of the police, Army, and teams of the State Disaster Response Fund and National Disaster Response Fund," Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, said.

2 arrested for firing gunshots outside Salman Khan's house

The Mumbai Police and the West Kachchh-Bhuj Police are both claiming credit for arresting two persons late on Monday night for their purported involvement in firing gunshots outside actor Salman Khan's residence. Five rounds were fired in the air early on Sunday morning, one of which hit the Galaxy Apartment wall, the building where the actor and his family reside. The duo - Vicky Sahibsaab Gupta, 24, and Sagar Srijogendra Pal, 21, - hail from Bihar's East Champaran district and belong to the Lawrence Bisnoi gang. After the incident, one of Bishnoi's relatives claimed responsibility for the firing.

Caste fault lines re-emerge in Muzaffarnagar

The sugarcane belt has become a more level playing field for caste-centric parties, with the BJP-RLD alliance taking the sting out of anti-Muslim rhetoric; meanwhile, Muslims, who constitute the largest chunk of the electorate, are disillusioned that no party has shown faith in them

GROUND REPORT

Anuj Kumar
MUZAFFARNAGAR

The changing colours of symbols and flag positions during an election tell a story. At the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) head office near the bustling Mahavir Chowk in Muzaffarnagar, the party's green and white flag is flying above the Bharatiya Janata Party's flag. At the recent roadshow of RLD chief Chaudhary Jayant Singh and BJP candidate Sanjeev Balyan, the saffron party's lotus symbol took on the unusual shades of green and white.

It appears that the BJP is allowing its small but influential partner to take the lead in this critical constituency in western Uttar Pradesh that it won by a whisker in 2019, when Mr. Balyan defeated Mr. Singh's father and the RLD's then-supremo Ajit Singh, who was then a joint candidate of the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, by only 6,500 votes.

Ajit Singh, who worked for Hindu-Muslim unity after the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013, died of COVID in May 2021. This time round, his son is not just seeking support for Mr. Balyan, who emerged as a Hindutva leader after the riots, against the Samajwadi Party's senior Jat leader Harinder Malik; he is also making it a prestige issue, as a sort of return gift for the BJP's decision to bestow the Bharat Ratna on his grandfather and former Prime Minister Charan Singh.

To the BJP cadre's displeasure, however, Mr. Singh is not changing his ideological stance. Metaphorically, they see him as a vegetarian who has walked into a non-vegetarian section and is not only refusing to change his habits, but is also making a grand show of it. That may be why he got delayed and missed the PM's Saharanpur rally. He took along hundreds of tractors for a show of strength with Mr. Balyan and then wished the crowds 'Id Mubarak', making appeals for social amity. This is a playbook that the BJP worker has not been accustomed to since 2013.

Electorally, this hub of sugarcane farmers has not proved sweet for his family. Apart from Ajit Singh's loss last year, in 1971, Charan Singh, by then a former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, was humbled at the hustings in Muzaffarnagar by a Communist Party of India candidate with the support of the Congress.

Intense campaign: BSP supporters during an election rally, ahead of Lok Sabha polls, in Muzaffarnagar, on April 14. PTI

MBCs irked

Across the street, Moolchand Kashyap is waiting for Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati to address a rally for party candidate Dara Singh Prajapati, who heads the Prajapati Mahasabha, a national social organisation for the most backward classes (MBCs).

"In 2019, Ajit Singh was seen as the Jat face. This time, it is Balyan who is being seen as one," the 74-year-old said.

Pointing to the BSP stole around his neck, the retired official of a government insurance company said that this was the first time that he had worn it. "Because Behenji has given political representation to one amongst us in the area, we have realised what the BJP has been promising us is not true," Mr. Kashyap said, referring to the BJP's unfulfilled promise of moving 17 MBC communities to the Scheduled Caste category. "Mayawati won't give it either but she is at least giving us political representation. After Muslims, our number [MBCs] is the highest in the constituency."

A section of the community is irked by Union Home Minister Amit Shah's description of the region as Jatland, during his rally in Shahpur. The sobriquet has pricked MBC youth who have been supporting the BJP on its Hindutva plank in order to take on the influence of erstwhile landlords which, according to them, has swelled disproportionately with the RLD and BJP joining hands. The SP's Mr. Malik, who was outside the political reckoning for a long time, is hoping to reap this discontent among the BJP's core voters. In his speeches, he is sidestepping emotional issues and is asking the party's State leadership to stay away to help him keep the election local.

Outside the BJP office, young Ankit Chaudhary, a BJP voter, had a piece of advice for the RLD chief: "If you enter a non vegetarian buffet, there is no point claiming that you are a vegetarian. People won't believe." What he meant was that Mr. Singh should shun the secular image and wrap himself in the Hindutva cloak.

In the race to cross the 400-seat mark, the BJP cadre seem to be missing the communal narrative that drove the central leadership's ambition.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is doing his bit. He is carefully sprinkling Urdu words like *nizam* and *janaza* in his chaste Hindi while praising the role of the double-engine government in eliminating the mafia of a particular hue.

This election, local poll pundits say, is playing out as a localised contest between Mr. Balyan and Mr. Malik, despite the BJP's top leadership holding four rallies in their candidate's support. Seasoned journalist Rashid Ali says that Mr. Balyan is on a sticky wicket as caste fault lines have re-emerged after a decade of communal polarisation in Muzaffarnagar.

The Muslims, who constitute the largest chunk of the electorate, are disillusioned that no party has shown faith in them. "Jats are only 1.5 lakh but they have two candidates. We are 5.5 lakh but we are being told that we will polarise," lamented Mohammad Ayub, a former pradhan in the Charthawal area who hails from the ironsmith community among Muslims.

Aditya Srivastava tops Civil Services Exam

Jaideep Deo Bhanj
NEW DELHI

Aditya Srivastava who secured the top rank in the Civil Services Examination, 2023, conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), results of which were declared on Tuesday, quit his job at Goldman Sachs, an investment banking company, to prepare for the examination as he wanted to get away from his desk job and work for the betterment of the society.

A BTech in electrical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, Mr. Srivastava, who hails from Lucknow, topped the examination in his third attempt. At present, he is undergoing IPS training in Hyderabad as he had cleared the examination in his second attempt as well.

Joyous day: First rank holder, Aditya Srivastava, and second rank holder, Animesh Pradhan. PTI/X

'Consistency is key'

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Srivastava said consistency and self-motivation are the key to cracking the examination. "I like reading and that helped me unwind during my preparation. I particularly like to read about dinosaurs. In fact, in one of my interviews I even mentioned to the panel that the popular movie *Jurassic Park* is not accurate," Mr. Srivastava said. He added that his journey to the top of the rank list was full of ups and downs and his advice to aspirants would be to learn from the experience of previous attempts.

A total of 1,016 candidates (664 men and 352 women) have been recommended by the Commission for appointment to various services. Among the top 25 successful candidates, 10 are women, two of whom are in the top five.

Animesh Pradhan from Talcher in Odisha, a BTech in Computer Science from National Institute of Technology, Rourkela, secured the second rank. He cleared the examination in his first attempt. Appearing for the examination was a culmination of his childhood dream and a well thought out career decision influenced by his childhood experiences of growing up in rural Odisha.

"Having grown up in Odisha and having seen a lot of socio-economic injustice around me, I wanted to come back and serve the people of my State in sectors of health and education," Mr. Pradhan said. He said he has seen a fair deal of setbacks in his personal life, having lost both his parents, and especially his mother a month ago.

For aspirants, he suggests "controlling the controllable". "There will be a lot of setbacks but try to cling to the ray of hope and fight the tough battle," he added. Despite finding very little time to indulge in hobbies, Mr. Pradhan used to practise freestyle dance with a group of dancers while preparing for UPSC.

Donuru Ananya Reddy, a graduate in geography from Miranda House, Delhi University, stood third with anthropology as her optional subject.

She hails from Mahabubnagar district in Telangana and began preparing for civil services on her own. "I was confident of securing a rank but did not expect to be among the first three rankers," she said.

P.K. Sidharth Ramkumar, who has a bachelor's degree in architechture from the College of Architecture in Thiruvananthapuram, secured the fourth rank with anthropology as his optional subject. Mr. Ramkumar is currently undergoing IPS training in Hyderabad after securing the 121st rank last year.

Ruhani, a graduate in economics from St. Stephens College, Delhi University, secured fifth rank with economics as her optional subject in her sixth and last attempt. She is also undergoing IPS training in Hyderabad.

The Civil Services Examination is conducted annually in three stages – preliminary, main and interview – to select officers of the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and others.

Centre says it does not maintain record of CAA applications

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has said that the government does not have the provision to maintain the record of applications received under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

In a Right to Information query, Ajay Bose, a resident of Amravati in Maharashtra had sought information about the total number of persons who had applied for citizenship after the CAA Rules were notified on March 11.

In response to the RTI application on April 15, the Ministry said, "The records are not being maintained as desired by you because the Citizenship Act, 1955 and Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 and the Rules made there under does not have the provision to maintain the records of citizenship application received. Further, as per the RTI Act, 2005, CPIO [Central Public Information Officer] is not authorised to create information. Hence the information sought may be treated as NIL."

The reply assumes significance as the total number of people who would benefit from the CAA is not known.

When the legislation was passed in Rajya Sabha on December 11, 2019, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said "lakhs and crores" of people would benefit whereas Derek O'Brien of the Trinamool Congress mentioned that the Director of the Intelligence Bureau had said in a report that around 31,000 people would be the immediate beneficiaries.

The Home Ministry notified the CAA Rules on March 11.

New panel to address issues of LGBTQ+ community

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Law and Justice on Tuesday notified a six-member committee to address issues related to the queer community. The committee, to be headed by the Cabinet Secretary, will suggest measures to ensure that the queer community does not encounter any discrimination in accessing goods and services or face threat of violence among others.

Last October, while hearing the plea on same-sex marriage, the SC had directed that such a panel be set up to address the challenges faced by the community in accordance with the statement made by the Centre in the court.

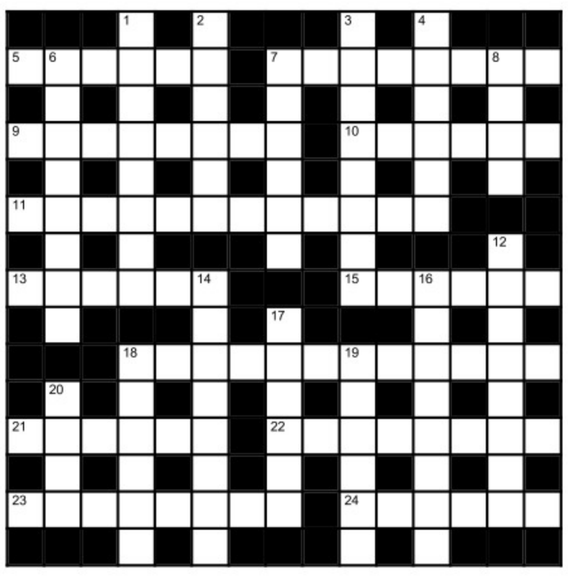
The order comes with the Model Code of Conduct in force and ahead of the first phase of voting for the Lok Sabha election.

TH CROSSWORD + 14151

(set by Vidwan)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

5 Bully her about naked actor (6)
7 Very popular curry – old and essentially Goan! (8)
9 We are so excited about opening of ports and naval strength (3,5)
10 Accepted amount of popular view (6)
11 Piano's no good! Can't record sadly! (7,5)
13 It's old, weathered and dull (6)
15 Size of old portable shelter (6)
18 Basically kids involved in 'terror' tactic, wanting piece of chocolate, perhaps (5,2,5)
21 Shared during festival, autumn retreats (6)
22 Conflict, contest involving some unspecified doctrine (8)
23 I turn one around for a quantum entity (8)
24 Poor, quiet and weird? Yes! (6)

Down

1 Unusual like a loose clay pit (8)
2 One making sketches for storage (6)
3 Picture pronounced covetousness and a guru (8)
4 Unkempt like Mathew and Theodore (6)
6 The toy, one occasionally modified for a canine (3,5)
7 Amazon starts to vandalise indiscriminately and runs back (6)
8 Like a particular tree? Ya! Ok! Maybe! (4)
12 Increased and hence excited (8)
14 What is seen on parade ground, little thing that crushes (8)
16 Bitumen and piece of cloth on a European herb (8)
17 Standing posture of top Korean leader, bold and basically overconfident (6)
18 Firm model, out of practice (6)
19 Weather is boring! Sleep! (6)
20 Festival hosted by many ulemas (4)

SUDOKU

7	3		4	2	8	5		
					5			2
	2							
5		1		8		3		
6			3		1			4
		8		7		1		9
							4	
1			5					
		9	2	6	7		1	3

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to PREVIOUS puzzle

R	E	C	E	S	S		F	U	L	L	M	O	O	N
	N		N		E		O		I		U		U	
B	E	D	S	I	D	E	S		G	A	M	E	T	E
	M		U		U		S		H		A		A	
T	Y	P	E	S	C	R	I	P	T		N	O	N	E
					E		L		E		D		D	
U	P	S	T	A	R	T	S		R	E	D	H	O	T
	R		R								A		U	
M	O	S	A	I	C		B	A	C	K	D	A	T	E
	N		N		O		R		A					
P	O	T	S		R	A	I	N	S	T	O	R	M	S
	U		P		S		G		I		R		E	
A	N	G	O	R	A		A	B	N	E	G	A	T	E
	C		R		I		D		O		A		A	
S	E	S	T	E	R	C	E		S	I	N	G	L	E

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3	7	4	9	8	2	5	6	1
9	1	5	7	4	6	8	3	2
6	2	8	3	5	1	9	4	7
4	9	2	1	7	3	6	8	5
1	6	3	5	9	8	7	2	4
5	8	7	2	6	4	1	9	3
2	4	6	8	1	5	3	7	9
8	5	9	4	3	7	2	1	6
7	3	1	6	2	9	4	5	8

FAITH

Relevance of Rama Navami

In their works, both Valmiki and Kamban say, "Wherever Rama is, that is Ayodhya", to highlight the fairness of Rama, who carried the principles of justice and fair play wherever he went. As we celebrate Rama Navami today, the first after the *Prana Pratishta* of the Bala Rama in Ayodhya, the relevance of Ayodhya in Kali Yuga is as perennial as it was in Tretha Yuga. The capital city stood as an example of religious, societal and individual fair play, due to the personal example of Rama, said Dhamal S. Ramakrishnan in a discourse.

Rama and Ayodhya are inseparable in a devotee's mind. In Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Rama left Ayodhya as a child and returned with Sita as his bride. When Dasaratha asked his subjects if he could crown Rama, the consent was unanimous. Rama had reached out to them, they said, to know their problems, treated everyone equally, obeyed his parents and guru, treated his siblings and family members well.Valmiki focuses on the challenges Rama faces and how he overcomes them without compromising on fair play, before returning to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana.

Rama Navami is celebrated by listening to discourses on *Ramayana*, visiting temples, chanting and writing Rama namam. God merely requires a devotee's prayers to offer His protection.

INBRIEF

Suzuki unveils Hayabusa 25th anniversary celebration edition

Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt. Ltd. (SMIPL), the two-wheeler subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan, announced the introduction of Suzuki Hayabusa 25th Anniversary Celebration Edition in India at prices starting from ₹17,70,000 (ex-showroom Delhi). The Hayabusa 25th Anniversary Celebration Edition packs the same 1,340cc in-line 4-cylinder fuel injected liquid-cooled DOHC engine as the current third generation Hayabusa, the company said.

Hinduja Tech allots ₹392 cr. CCPS to Mauritius company

Hinduja Tech Ltd. (HTL) has allotted 5.12 crore compulsorily convertible preference shares (CCPS) totalling to ₹392 crore to its investor Gandaraditya Chola, a Mauritius company. The Ashok Leyland subsidiary also allotted 10 equity shares at a premium of ₹66.55 per share, totalling to ₹765.50. The cash transaction was completed on April 15, Ashok Leyland said in a filing. As per the agreed formula, the CCPS will be convertible to one equity share for one CCPS.

Savita Oil Tech unveils Savsol Ester 5 lubricants range

Intensifying competition in the automotive lubricants market, Savita Oil Technologies Ltd. has announced the introduction of Savsol Ester 5 range of lubricants in India. The range, which is priced 5-7% more than common lubricants, promises to provide better fuel efficiency and performance for two wheeler and four wheeler owners. The products will set new benchmarks in the lubricants industry," said Gautam N. Mehra, CMD, Savita Oil Technologies.

IMF forecasts India's economy to grow 6.8% this fiscal year

World economy is 'remarkably resilient' but challenges remain, Fund says in its 'World Economic Outlook April 2024'; lifts India forecast from Jan.

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday raised its growth projection for India's GDP in the current fiscal year 2024/25 to 6.8%, and forecast a 6.5% expansion next year. The latest FY25 forecast is a 0.3 percentage point upward revision from January's projection, the IMF said in its World Economic Outlook April 2024, released on Tuesday.

Strong outlook: Growth could end up higher than expected due to strengthening private demand, says IMF's Daniel Leigh. AP

The global economy had remained "remarkably resilient" with steady growth and inflation returning to target and had "defied expectations of stagflation and global recession" in the wake of the post-pandemic supply disruptions, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and subsequent global energy and food crises as well as the monetary tightening across economies, the IMF observed.

It projected global output growth in 2024 and 2025 at 3.2%, after bottoming out at at 2.3% at the end of 2022.

'Liberalise investment'

The projected moderation in India's growth rate from 7.8% last fiscal year was due to a tightening in monetary and fiscal policy, necessary to bring inflation down, IMF economist Daniel Leigh said at a press briefing on the report. Inflation was projected to be 4.6% this year and 4.2% next year, Mr. Leigh added.

Growth could end up higher than expected due to strengthening private demand, he added.

"Also, an upside comes from the potential for reforms that would liberalise foreign investment and really boost exports and boost jobs and labour force participation," he said, partly in response to a question from *The Hindu* on policy recommendations for the Indian economy and addressing unemployment concerns.

"So, it's a very strong outlook and... a balanced risk outlook," he added.

For the global economy, the IMF expected median headline inflation to ease from 2.8% at the end of this year to 2.4% at the end of 2025. "Most indicators point to a soft landing," the Fund said.

'Less scarring'

"Another piece of good news is that we project less economic scarring," IMF Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said during a virtual briefing.

Scarring, or the gap in output compared with pre-pandemic levels, was less in most regions with the exception of low income and developing countries, he said.

The IMF called for vigilance, citing recent inflation numbers that were pushing upward. Most of the slowing in inflation was due to falling energy prices but services inflation remained high and could derail this disinflation path, the IMF cautioned.

'Spatial distribution, timing of monsoon rains hold the key'

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department's prediction of an above normal monsoon this year, the first such forecast in eight years, bodes well for the economy's growth and inflation outlook but the projection of below-par rainfall in parts of eastern, northeastern and northwestern India highlights the risks.

"In 2023 as well, the east and northeast received below-average rainfall, at 82% of the long period average," Crisil economists wrote in a note on takeaways from the IMD's first forecast. "If this year's prediction were to manifest, States in this region (key producers of rice, sugarcane and maize) could face yet another year of rainfall distress," they added on Tuesday.

The monsoon forecast, coming amid extreme heatwave conditions, triggers hope for the farm sector and may serve as a check on high food inflation but the spatial distribution will matter as some regions, including the northwestern and eastern parts, are expected to see below normal rainfall, said Jahnavi Prabhakar, economist at Bank of Baroda.

A healthy monsoon will also help replenish water reservoir levels that stood at 33% of total capacity on April 12 as compared with 39% last year. This will support the rabi crop.

While more details on the monsoon's onset and spread are expected in the IMD's next forecasts in May, the Crisil economists stressed that rainfall distribution would be watched closely this year.

"Uneven distribution over regions and time in the past year, with other weather disturbances, had hurt agriculture output and incomes while keeping food inflation persistently high," they wrote, citing the spike in food inflation through FY24, from an already high 6.6% in FY23, and the sharp drop in farm sector gross value added (GVA) to 0.7%, from 4.7% in the previous year.

'Monsoon shock'

"Areas and/or crops that face a monsoon shock (if at all) for the second straight year could suffer more than others," the Crisil economists noted. The timing of rains would be critical as sowing decisions were based on rainfall arrival and its quantum.

"With about 43% of... total cropped area rain-dependent, adequate rainfall is required in July and August, the critical months for the kharif crop," Crisil's economists pointed out.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	TUESDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	72,944	-0.62
US Dollar	83.61	-0.20
Gold	73,750	0.95
Brent oil	89.95	0.87

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3106.40	-41.05
Adani Ports	1304.35	-11.20
Apollo Hosp	6334.75	31.60
Asian Paints	2830.00	-14.40
Axis Bank	1051.90	-6.05
Bajaj Auto	8919.15	-77.90
Bajaj Finserv	1618.50	-38.35
Bajaj Finance	6954.25	-122.00
Bharti Airtel	1216.45	-8.10
BPCL	592.30	2.75
Britannia Ind	4740.70	-21.20
Cipla	1375.20	-6.20
Coal India	453.20	2.20
Divis Lab	3764.20	47.65
Dr Reddys Lab	6050.35	39.50
Eicher Motors	4355.70	136.35
Grasim Ind	2242.95	5.55
HCL Tech	1477.30	-27.75
HDFC Bank	1509.25	14.55
HDFC Life	604.60	-8.35
Hero MotoCorp	4322.90	-58.30
Hindalco	608.85	-3.85
Hind Unilever	2220.80	26.75
ICICI Bank	1067.05	-11.30
IndusInd Bank	1490.95	-48.95
Infosys	1414.45	-53.70
ITC	425.90	0.00
JSW Steel	845.25	-15.20
Kotak Bank	1792.60	-5.55
L&T	3543.45	-57.35
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4662.85	-152.30
M&M	2031.30	-22.15
Maruti Suzuki	12502.70	79.85
NestleIndia	2546.10	-7.55
NTPC	359.25	-1.90
ONGC	283.15	3.30
PowerGrid Corp	274.25	0.20
Reliance Ind	2931.50	1.85
SBI Life	1462.75	-4.15
State Bank	751.70	-5.80
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2400.75	-13.90
Sun Pharma	1537.55	-2.50
TataConsumerProduct	1135.65	5.00
Tata Motors	992.80	-6.00
Tata Steel	160.05	-0.80
TCS	3872.80	-68.40
Tech Mahindra	1195.80	-22.95
Titan	3645.90	45.30
UltraTech Cement	9463.80	-42.45
Wipro	448.35	-11.00

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 16

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.34	83.66
Euro	88.61	88.95
British Pound	103.76	104.16
Japanese Yen (100)	53.87	54.08
Chinese Yuan	11.51	11.56
Swiss Franc	91.25	91.61
Singapore Dollar	61.08	61.33
Canadian Dollar	60.42	60.66
Malaysian Ringitt	17.38	17.46
Australian Dollar	53.48	53.69

Source:Indian Bank

Bank Bazaar set to finance Montra E-3W

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

TI Clean Mobility, an unit of Tube Investments of India, joined hands with Bike Bazaar to offer vehicle-financial solutions to its customers for the purchase of its electric three-wheeler Montra Super Auto.

"With lower interest rates and extended loan terms for Super Auto ownership, we aim to not only alleviate financial burden but also promote environmentally-responsible practices," said Montra Electric 3W division Business Head Roy Kurian in a statement.

The goal of partnering with Bike Bazaar is to provide customers with simplified financing choices, a smoother customer journey, and quick assistance, according to the Murugappa group company.

Montra Electric passenger three-wheeler Super Auto features a 10 kWh battery pack, offers a range of 203 km and top speed of 55 kmph.

Tl Clean Mobility is also working on electrifying other categories such as small- and heavy-commercial vehicles and tractors.

ZEEL withdraws application to merge operations with Sony

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. on Tuesday said it has withdrawn its application, seeking implementation of the merger with Sony, filed before the National Company Law Tribunal Mumbai bench.

The company filed an application with the NCLT on January 24, 2024, seeking directions on the implementation of a composite scheme of arrangement between ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. (ZEEL) and Sony group firms Culver Max Entertainment Pvt Ltd and Bangla Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.

Earlier on January 22, Sony Group Corp called off a $10 billion merger of its India unit with ZEEL, following a stalemate over who will lead the merged entity. The deal was announced more than two years ago. Sony had sought $90 million as break-up fees for violating the terms of the merger pact and invoked arbitration.

In a statement on Tuesday, ZEEL said the steps taken by it to withdraw the implementation application from NCLT are based on the legal advice received by the board.

"This decision will also enable the company to pursue growth and evaluate strategic opportunities to generate higher value for all shareholders. The Board remains committed to reviewing the strategic action-oriented steps taken by the management and providing timely guidance," it added.

The company further said, "This decision to withdraw the implementation application will enable the company to continue to aggressively pursue all its claims against Sony in the ongoing arbitration proceedings at the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) and in other forums".

'Current sugar season has 84 mills operating as on April 15'

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

As many as 84 sugar mills are still crushing cane as on April 15 during the current sugar season that began on October 1, 2023, and will end on September 30, 2024, the Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association said.

Of the 532 sugar mills that started production this season, 448 have completed sugarcane crushing.

Further, 310.93 lakh tonnes of sugar was produced till April 15 this season, as against 312.38 lakh tonnes in the same period last season, after taking into consideration sugar diverted for ethanol.

Aditya Birla Capital unveils direct-to-customers platform

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Aditya Birla Capital Ltd. on Tuesday unveiled Aditya Birla Capital Digital (ABCD), an omnichannel Direct to Customers (D2C) platform, aiming to add 30 million users in the next three years. The company said the platform offers a simple and differentiated experience across all touch points including mobile app, website, branches, and virtual engagement channel.

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
4th Floor, Chanderlok Building, 36 Janpath, New Delhi-110001
Phone: 23353503 FAX: 23753923

Petition No. 58/TL/2024 Dated: 8.4.2024

NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003

An application under Sections 14 and 15 of the Electricity Act, 2003 (the Act) has been made by POWERGRID KPS3 Transmission System Limited, B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi - 110016, for the grant of a separate transmission licence for the implementation of the transmission system for evacuation of power from potential renewable energy zone in Khavda area of Gujarat under Phase-IV (7GW): Part E3 through "Regulated Tariff Mechanism" (RTM) mode (hereinafter referred to as the 'transmission scheme/project'). The scope of the project for which a transmission licence has been sought is as follows:

Sl. No.	Scope of the Transmission Scheme	Item Description	Implementation timeframe
1.	Augmentation of transformation capacity at KPS3 (GIS) by 1X1500 MVA, 765/400 kV ICT (7th) on Bus section-I	• 1500 MVA, 765/400 kV ICT-1 No. • 765 kV bays-2 Nos. on Bus Section-I (including 1 No. bay for Dia completion) • 400 kV bays-2 Nos. on Bus section-I (including 1 No. bay for Dia completion)	24 months from the date of allocation, i.e. by 6.7.2025
		Total Estimated Cost:	**Rs. 216 crore**

Note:

1) The TSP shall implement one complete diameter consisting of 2 Main Bays & 1 Tie Bay at both 765 kV & 400 kV levels of KPS3 (GIS) required for completion of diameter (GIS) in a one-and-half breaker scheme.

2) Further, the TSP of KPS3 shall provide space to carry out the above augmentation work.

2. The Central Transmission Utility of India Limited vide its letter dated 24.1.2024 has recommended for the grant of transmission licence to the applicant to establish the proposed transmission system.

3. Based on the material available on record, the Commission vide order dated 8.4.2024 in Petition No. 58/TL/2024, has proposed to issue transmission licence to the applicant for establishment of the transmission scheme as noted in para 1 above.

4. A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State transmission licence to POWERGRID KPS3 Transmission System Limited before the Commission can be accessed at the website **www.powergrid/.in/subsidiaries** or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.

5. Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act that suggestions or objections, if any, to the Commission's proposal to grant a transmission licence to the applicant, as aforesaid, be sent to the undersigned by 19.4.2024 at the above noted address. The suggestions or objections received after the specified date shall not be considered.

6. The application shall be taken up for the further hearing by the Commission on 23.4.2024. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/-
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

Farm sector can grow over 6% in FY25 on good monsoon, says NITI Aayog's Chand

Prabhudatta Mishra
NEW DELHI

The agriculture and allied sectors may register more than 6% growth in 2024-25 going by the predictions of a favourable monsoon and low base of the previous year, NITI Aayog Member Ramesh Chand told *businessline*.

"This year (2024-25) will be highly favourable for agriculture, mainly due to two factors. One, the monsoon rainfall will be normal or above normal, as per reports by various agencies. Even in terms of regional distribution, the forecasts are encouraging. Two, the agriculture growth in 2023-24 was 0.67%, which means the base (for 2024-25) is low," Mr. Chand said.

Whenever such a combination has happened in the past, farm sector growth has topped 6%, he observed. "There is no reason this past pattern will not be repeated this year if the monsoon rainfall turns out as predicted."

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted an 'above-normal' monsoon, at 106% of the long-period average (LPA) of 87 cm, while private weather forecaster Skymet said the monsoon may be 'normal' at 102%.

'Rising prices'

The NITI Aayog member pointed out "real prices" of agriculture have been rising for several years. "If you take the wholesale prices of agriculture relative to non-agriculture, farm prices are rising. The wholesale price index (WPI) of agri-commodities is rising faster than non-agri-commodities," Mr. Chand said, adding stability in maintaining prices is required due to this aspect.

The government's action to maintain stability is seen by some as a move to bring down prices, he pointed out, adding such was not the case. "Stability means to prevent an abnormal high-level rise in the price of a commodity."

Mr. Chand also favoured allowing increased exports in the case of surplus production of certain crops during the kharif season.

Currently, the government has restricted the export of non-Basmati rice, wheat, sugar and onion. The curbs on non-Basmati rice may be revisited in September-October when the government would have assessed rice output , official sources had said.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

March textile, apparel exports expand 6.9%

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

Textiles and apparel exports, under stress for more than a year, rose 6.9% year-on year in March. However, for the financial year 2023-24, shipments shrank 3.2%.

Cotton yarn, fabrics and made-up exports climbed 6.78% in March from the year-earlier period. For FY 24, these saw a 6.71 % increase year-on-year.

Apparels slide 10.3%

Apparel exports, which rose 1.7 % last month compared with March 2023, suffered a 10.3% decline in fiscal 2023-2024, from 2022-2023.

According to Sunil Patwari, chairman of the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council, the growth of cotton textile exports last financial year despite geo-strategic challenges showed the resilience of the Indian textile industry.

The new government at the Centre should address issues such as cotton prices and preferential access in key markets to sustain the growth, he added.

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia call for a ceasefire and aid delivery in Gaza

REUTERS

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia called for a ceasefire and uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, on a visit to Islamabad, said international efforts toward a ceasefire have been "insufficient" while Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar called the Gaza killings "genocide". AP

LONDON

Muslim school student loses U.K. court bid over prayer rituals ban

AP

A Muslim student lost a U.K. court challenge on Tuesday against a top London school's ban on prayer rituals, in a case about freedom of religion in schools. The student took legal action against the Michaela Community School saying the policy was discriminatory and "uniquely" affected her faith due to its ritualised nature. AFP

THE HAGUE

Baku 'ethnic cleansing' complete, Armenia tells UN top court

AP

Armenia on Tuesday accused Azerbaijan at the UN top court of having "completed ethnic cleansing" in the former breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh, claims dismissed as "cherry picking" by its bitter rival Baku. The two countries are embroiled in a long-running legal clash at the International Court of Justice. AFP

WASHINGTON

'Despite economic crisis, Pakistan went on with nuclear programme'

AFP

Pakistan sustained its nuclear programme last year despite its economic turmoil as its contentious relationship with India continues to drive its defence policy, a top U.S. intelligence official told Congress. The remarks by Lt Gen Jeffrey Kruse, Director of the Defence Intelligence Agency came at a hearing about China. PTI

UN officials unable to talk to Hamas attack victims

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

Israel is preventing UN investigators from speaking to witnesses and victims of the October 7 Hamas attack, former UN rights chief Navi Pillay, who is chairing a three-person probe, said on Tuesday.

"I deplore the fact that people inside Israel who wish to speak to us are being denied that opportunity, because we cannot get access into Israel," Ms. Pillay said.

"So far as the government of Israel is concerned, we have faced not merely a lack of cooperation but active obstruction of our efforts to receive evidence from Israeli witnesses and victims to the events that occurred in southern Israel," said Chris Sidoti, one of the three members of the Commission of Inquiry.

Israel and Iran trade threats leaving West Asia on edge

Tel Aviv's military says Tehran would not get off 'scot-free'; President Raisi warns that 'the slightest action against Iran's interests will definitely be met with a severe, extensive and painful response'

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israel and Iran traded threats on Tuesday after Tehran's first ever direct attack on its arch-foe sharply heightened regional tensions as the Gaza war ground on with no truce in sight.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said Iran would not get off "scot-free" after Iran and its allies launched a barrage of over 300 missiles, drones and rockets at Israel at the weekend.

'Cannot let it pass'

"We cannot stand still from this kind of aggression," Mr. Hagari said, a day after Israel's military chief vowed there would "a response" to Iran's offensive.

Iran said its attack was an act of self-defence following a deadly Israeli air strike on its consulate in Syria, and that it would consider the matter "concluded" unless Israel retaliated.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi warned that "the slightest action against Iran's interests will definitely be met with a severe, extensive and painful response".

U.S. President Joe Biden stressed on Monday that "the United States is committed to Israel's security" and wants to prevent the conflict from spreading.

Washington, Israel's top ally and arms supplier, has made clear it will not join Israel in any attack on their common adversary Iran, a senior U.S. official said.

World leaders have urged restraint and de-escalation.

Proof of attack: An Army member shows an Iranian missile which fell in Israel on the weekend, near Kiryat Malachi on Tuesday. AFP

Putin's remark

During a phone call with Iran's Mr. Raisi, Russian President Vladimir Putin called on both sides to "prevent a new round of confrontation fraught with catastrophic consequences for the entire region", the Kremlin said.

Israel has meanwhile kept bombing targets in Gaza, the Hamas-ruled coastal territory that has been largely devastated by more than six months of war and a siege on its 2.4 million people.

Stop backing settler attacks in West Bank, UN tells Israel

Reuters
GENEVA

The United Nations human rights office on Tuesday called on Israel to halt its support of attacks by settlers in the occupied West Bank, which has seen an uptick of raids by Israel since the Hamas-led October 7 attack.

The call came a day after Israeli settlers shot dead two Palestinians in the West Bank on Monday, and the Israeli forces killed a Palestinian teenager during a military raid.

"Israel, as the occupying power, must take all measures in its power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety in the occupied West Bank," said Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

"This obligation includes protecting Palestinians from settler attacks, and ending unlawful use of force against Palestinians by the Israeli Security Forces."

She added: "The Israeli Security Forces must immediately end their active participation in and support for settler attacks on Palestinians."

Violence in the West Bank was already on the rise before Israel's assault on Gaza, which was triggered by an October 7 Hamas-led attack on southern Israel. It has escalated since, with stepped-up Israeli military raids, settler violence and Palestinian street attacks.

Ms. Shamdasani described the escalating violence in the West Bank as "a matter of grave concern."

In addition to more than 33,000 Palestinians killed by Israel in Gaza, the Palestinian Health Ministry says at least 466 people in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli forces or settlers.

Perpetual agony: Mourners during the funeral of a Palestinian killed in an Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank. REUTERS

Sri Lanka govt. to resume talks with bond holders soon

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has already reached an agreement with its bilateral creditors, including India and Paris Club members

The Sri Lankan government, which is trying to finalise a debt treatment plan with its private creditors, will resume talks with them in London after the World Bank's Spring Meetings in Washington DC concludes later this week, authorities said.

"We are confident that we will be able to talk to ISB holders and come to a final settlement before the IMF holds their next meeting in June where Sri Lanka's third tranche will be released," Sagala Ratnayake, Senior Adviser to the President on National Security and Chief of the Presidential Staff, told local media on Monday.

Sri Lanka has already reached an "in-principle agreement" with its bilateral creditors, including India and Paris Club members, part of the country's Official Creditor Committee, and is hoping to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with them soon. China decided to stay out of the platform, but Beijing has promised to treat Sri Lanka's debt on terms comparable with those of other bilateral creditors, according to the government.

Seeking better terms

Unable to fully agree with the deal put forward by the private creditors or International Sovereign Bond (ISB) holders, the Ranil Wickremesinghe administration, along with its financial and legal advisers Lazard and Clifford Chance, has been negotiating for better terms that are compatible with its International Monetary Fund (IMF)-led recovery programme. Officials did not share the specifics of the negotiations citing confidentiality clauses.

Staff level deal

In March 2024, Sri Lanka reached a staff level agreement with the Fund on the second review of its Extended Fund Facility. Once the review is approved by IMF Management and completed by the IMF Executive Board, the island nation will have access to SDR 254 million (about $337 million), the third tranche as part of a programme that put Sri Lanka on a path of austerity.

In its latest development update on Sri Lanka, published this month, the World Bank has noted that Sri Lanka's economy has shown "early signs of stabilisation" with improved fiscal and external balances, supported by a recovery in remittances and tourism and the continued debt service suspension. "The modest economic recovery will be insufficient to reverse welfare losses experienced during the crisis, poverty is estimated to remain above 22 % until 2026," the World Bank noted.

National treasure on fire

Smoke billows following a fire at the Old Stock Exchange in Copenhagen's Boersen on Tuesday. Danish rescue services said the fire that engulfed the 17th-century former stock exchange, ravaging the building and toppling its iconic spire, was 'under control'. REUTERS

Germany, China can help achieve peace in Ukraine, says Scholz

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Tuesday he hoped Berlin and Beijing could help achieve a "just peace" in Ukraine, as he met President Xi Jinping in the Chinese capital.

The Chancellor arrived in China on Sunday, accompanied by a large delegation of Ministers and business executives on his second visit to the country since taking office.

Meeting with Mr. Xi at Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guesthouse on Tuesday, Mr. Scholz told the Chinese leader he hoped to discuss "how we can contribute more to a just peace in Ukraine".

While China says it is a neutral party in the Ukraine conflict, it has been criticised for refusing to condemn Moscow for its offensive.

Mr. Scholz on Tuesday told Mr. Xi that "the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and Russia's armament have a very significant negative impact on security in Europe".

He also touched on areas where the two countries could cooperate, including climate change.

Ukraine 'ran out' of missiles to defend power plant: Zelenskyy

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Russia was able to destroy a key power plant serving Kyiv because Ukraine ran out of defensive missiles, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday.

For three-and-a-half weeks, Russia has launched near continuous strikes on Ukraine's power grid, leaving over a million people in the country without electricity.

The Trypilska thermal power station, one of the biggest electricity suppliers to the Kyiv region, was destroyed by Russian missiles on April 11.

"There were 11 missiles flying. We destroyed the first seven. Four destroyed Trypilska. Why? Because there were zero missiles," Mr. Zelenskyy said in an interview with U.S. channel PBS.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy

"We ran out of missiles to defend Trypilska," the Ukraine President added.

Ukraine has grown increasingly frustrated at aid hold-ups from allies, including air defences which it says are urgently needed to repel deadly Russian attacks.

Further strain

Mr. Zelenskyy's warning came as overnight storms put further strain on Ukraine's fragile energy system, cutting power to thousands of people.

"Due to the bad weather, 173 settlements in four regions are without power supply," Ukraine's Energy Ministry said on Tuesday.

National grid operator Ukrenergo warned earlier this month Ukraine's energy system needed an overhaul due to the repeated Russian attacks.

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ADDENDUM

No. 6602/OMC/Persnl./2024
Date: 15/04/2024

In continuation to the Advertisement No. 91/OMC dated 14.03.2024, the last date of receipt of application for the post of Dy. General Manager (Security) in E-5 Grade & Manager (Security) in E-3 Grade, which was on 15.04.2024, **is hereby extended up to 30.04.2024.**

Candidates already applied against this Advt. need not apply again.

All other terms & conditions of the above advertisement shall remain unchanged.

Sd/-
Executive Director (P&A)

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD
(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office : Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram-14,
(Telephone No. 0471-2945600, 2945646),
E-mail : edrugs.kmscl@kerala.gov.in,
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021616

No.KMSCL/ED/12/2024 Date : 15.04.2024

E-TENDER NOTICE

Online bids are invited from manufacturers/direct importers / loan licensees on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the procurement of ART Drugs for the year 2024-25.

Sl. No.	Tender No. and Date	Category	No. of items
1.	KMSCL/ED/ART Drugs/RC/2024/005 dtd. 15.04.2024	ART Drugs	2

The last date and time of online uploading of tenders will be 13.05.2024, 5.00 pm. The date and time of opening of Technical bid will be 16.05.2024 11.30 am. Tenders shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal **www.etenders.kerala.gov.in**.

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender Inviting Authority)

HUNTING IT DOWN

Royals complete joint-highest successful chase, equals record

AP

Rajasthan Royals completed the joint-highest successful run chase (224 for eight) in IPL history by chasing Kolkata Knight Riders' 223 for six at the Eden Gardens stadium. Royals equalled its own record which it set in it's chase against Punjab Kings (then called Kings XI Punjab) in 2020.

TON MACHINE

Buttler in seventh heaven after pulling off a heist for Royals

AFP

Jos Buttler's seventh IPL hundred, and his second of the season, powered RR to a dramatic two-wicket win off the final delivery in the match against KKR at Eden Gardens on Tuesday. Buttler's 100s: 124 (vs SRH, 2021); 100 (MI, 2022); 103 (KKR, 2022); 116 (DC, 2022); 106 n.o. (RCB, 2022); 100 n.o. (RCB, 2024); 107 n.o. (KKR, 2024).

ONE MORE DAY

BCB extends Mustafizur's IPL stay, will play against Punjab Kings

S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

The Bangladesh Cricket Board has extended Mustafizur's NOC for CSK by one day. Instead of returning to Bangladesh on April 30, he will also be available for the match against Punjab Kings on May 1. With this, Mustafizur is now eligible for games against LSG on April 19 and 23, SRH on April 28, and PBKS on May 1.

DESERVING

Pant should be in India's squad for T20 World Cup: Ponting

VIJAY SONEJI

DC's head coach Ricky Ponting categorically stated that Rishabh Pant should be included in the Indian team for the T20 World Cup beginning in June. "Do I believe if Rishabh should be there in the World Cup squad? Absolutely I do. He deserves to be in that WT20 squad by the end of the IPL," said Ponting.

Buttler nails an improbable chase with a Royal ton

The Rajasthan side's opener snatches a last-ball victory after 38 runs were needed off 15 deliveries with two wickets remaining; heartbreak for Knight Riders as Narine's blazing century goes in vain

IPL-17

P.K. Ajith Kumar
KOLKATA

Jos Buttler played one of the greatest IPL knocks on Tuesday night.

His sensational 107 not out (60b, 9x4, 6x6) gave Rajasthan Royals an unforgettable – and for much of the match – an unlikely last-ball win against Kolkata Knight Riders. The two-wicket victory has consolidated Royals' position at the top of the table.

Daunting target

RR was set a daunting target by the host, thanks largely to Sunil Narine's maiden career century (109, 56b, 13x4, 6x6). If RR was to win, it had to equal its own record of the biggest successful chase in IPL history.

That didn't look likely when the Royals lost wickets regularly. When Shimron Hetmyer, who had taken them home in the last match, fell for a duck, the score read 121 for six in 12.2 overs.

A tall order it certainly was, with not much batting left. But Buttler's 57-run partnership for the seventh wicket with Rovman Powell (26, 13b, 1x4, 3x6) allowed Royals to dream.

The dream was realised by Buttler, the Impact Player who had just the tail to support him. Forty-six were needed from the last three, then it came down to 28 off two.

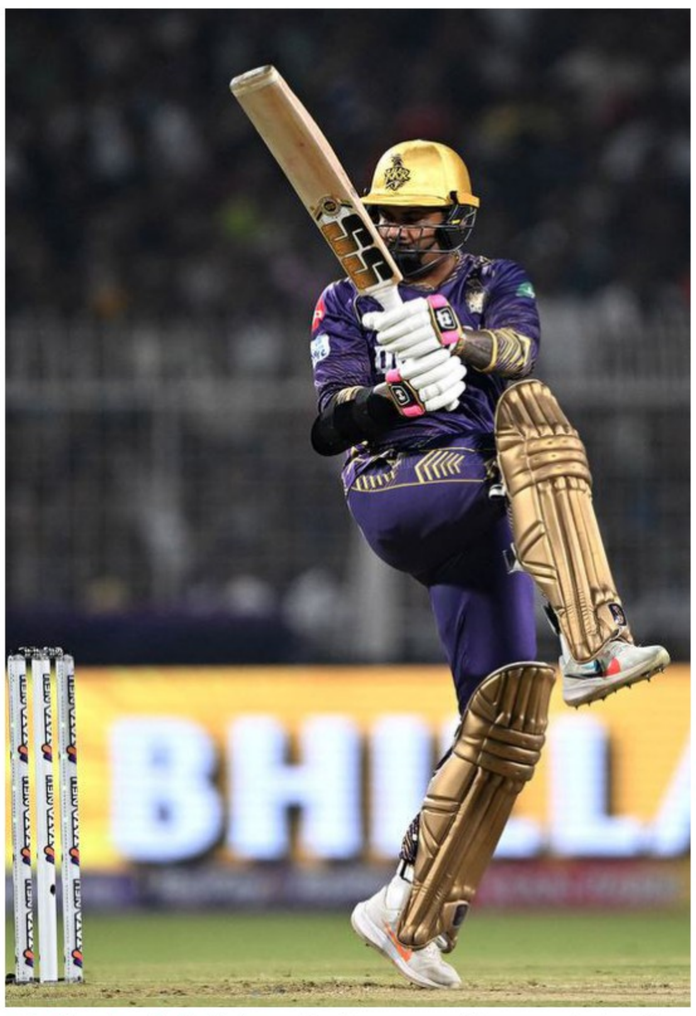
Buttler took off 19 off the penultimate over, bowled by Harshit Rana, and then hit Varun Chakravarthy's first ball in the last over over long-on for a six to ease the nerves of his teammates in the dugout. A single off the last ball dashed KKR's hopes of a Super Over.

Like Buttler, Narine carried his team's innings on his shoulders. He played strokes around this hallowed ground, but he seemed particularly keen to hit the bowlers over their heads.

Only one other batter reached 30, as the promising teenager Angkrish Raghuvanshi (30, 18b, 5x4) helped him add 85 for the second wicket. KKR had lost Phil Salt in the fourth over as Avesh Khan took a stunning one-handed return catch off his own bowling.

Narine and Raghuvanshi, however, went on to frustrate the Royals bowlers. It took a fine yorker from Trent Boult to end Narine's remarkable innings.

But, this was going to be Buttler's night.



Tale of two hundreds: Narine and Buttler came up with spectacular three-figure knocks, but it was the latter who finished on the winning side. AFP & PTI

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
Phil Salt c & b Avesh 10 *(13b, 1x4)*, Sunil Narine b Boult 109 *(56b, 13x4, 6x6)*, Angkrish Raghuvansh c Ashwin b Kuldeep Sen 30 *(18b, 5x4)*, Shreyas Iyer lbw b Chahal 11 *(7b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Andre Russell c Jurel b Avesh 13 *(10b, 2x4)*, Rinku Singh (not out) 20 *(9b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Venkatesh Iyer c Jurel b Kuldeep Sen 8 *(6b, 1x4)*, Ramandeep Singh (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (b-4, lb-4, w-13): 21; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 223.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-21 (Salt, 3.3 overs), 2-106 (Raghuvanshi, 10.4), 3-133 (Shreyas, 12.6), 4-184 (Russell, 16.1), 5-195 (Narine, 17.3), 6-215 (Venkatesh, 19.2).

ROYALS BOWLING
Boult 4-0-31-1, Avesh 4-0-35-2, Kuldeep Sen 4-0-46-2, Chahal 4-0-54-1, Ashwin 4-0-49-0.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS
Yashasvi Jaiswal c Venkatesh b Arora 19 *(9b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Jos Buttler (**Impact Player in place of Kuldeep Sen**) (not out) 107 *(60b, 9x4, 6x6)*, Sanju Samson c Narine b Harshit 12 *(8b, 2x4)*, Riyan Parag c Russell b Harshit 34 *(14b, 4x4, 2x6)*, Dhruv Jurel lbw b Narine 2 *(4b)*, R. Ashwin c Raghuvanshi b Varun 8 *(11b, 1x4)*, Shimron Hetmyer c Shreyas b Varun 0 *(1b)*, Rovman Powell lbw b Narine 26 *(13b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Trent Boult run out 0 *(1b)*, Avesh Khan (not out) 0 *(0b)*; Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-14): 16; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 224.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-22 (Jaiswal, 1.5), 2-47 (Samson, 4.2), 3-97 (Parag, 7.5), 4-100 (Jurel, 8.4), 5-121 (Ashwin, 12.1), 6-121 (Hetmyer, 12.2), 7-178 (Powell, 16.5), 8-186 (Boult, 17.3).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING
Starc 4-0-50-0, Arora (**Impact Player in place of Rinku**) 3-0-45-1, Harshit 4-0-45-2, Narine 4-0-30-2, Varun 4-0-36-2, Russell 1-0-17-0.

Toss: Royals; **PoM:** Buttler.
Royals won by two wickets off the final delivery.

Next assignment

KKR: April 21 vs **RCB**
Kolkata, 3.30 p.m.

RR: April 22 vs **MI**
Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

Good time to get a mental and physical break, says Maxwell

Done: Maxwell feels it's time to fly away from it all. K. MURALI KUMAR

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Glenn Maxwell made an admirably honest admission when asked if he missed Royal Challengers Bengaluru's match against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Monday due to fitness concerns.

As it turns out, Maxwell, who has struggled with his form, requested the RCB team management to give him a "mental and physical break".

"It was a pretty easy decision. I went to Faf (du Plessis) and the coaches after the last game and said it was probably time we tried someone else.

"I have been in this situation in the past where you can keep playing and get yourself deeper into a hole. Now is actually a good time for me to get a bit of a mental and physical break; get my body right. If I'm required to get in during the tournament, I can hopefully get back into a really solid mental and physical space where I can still have an impact," Maxwell stated after RCB went down to SRH here on Monday.

"We have had a pretty big deficiency straight after the PowerPlay, which has been my area of strength over the last couple of seasons. I felt like I wasn't contributing in a positive way with the bat, and with the results and the position we find ourselves on the table, I think it's a good time to give someone else an opportunity to show their wares. Hopefully, someone can make that spot their own," Maxwell added.

Gill's Titans and Pant's Capitals look for consistent results

Sports Bureau
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans and Delhi Capitals will look to stabilise their undulating fortunes when they meet at the Narendra Modi Stadium here on Wednesday.

Both sides snapped out of successive defeats with a victory in their previous encounter, but neither outfit has won back-to-back matches this season.

GT's three-wicket triumph over the high-flying Rajasthan Royals was made possible by a stunning assault by its lower middle-order, comprising Rahul Tewatia, M. Shahrukh Khan and Rashid Khan, that helped chase down 196.

Headache

But it is the top- and middle-order combinations that have proved a headache. Injuries to David Miller (three games out), Wriddhiman Saha (two) and Azmatullah Omarzai (two) opened opportunities for Kane Williamson, Matthew Wade, B.R. Sharath, and Abhinav Manohar. No one has so far lapped it up.

DC's six-wicket victory over Lucknow Super Giants, that lifted the side out of last position, was fashioned by wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav and debutant Aussie batter Jake Fraser-McGurk.

Swing factor: Tewatia was one of the architects in Titans' last-ball win over Royals. VIJAY SONEJI

Kuldeep, after missing three games because of a groin injury, made a sensational return (4-0-20-3) while Fraser-McGurk, in for the injured Mitchell Marsh, smashed a 35-ball 55 in a 168-run pursuit.

Versus LSG, DC also unleashed an all-Indian bowling attack and the former's total (167) was the lowest in the four contests DC has bowled first. Rishabh Pant's consistent and brisk run-making, even as he juggles the twin burdens of captaincy and wicket-keeping, also augurs well.

DC will, however, be sweating over the fitness of David Warner. He was hit on the left hand against LSG, and though head coach Ricky Ponting said the scans were satisfactory, his availability will be known only on match-day.

Today's match

GUJARAT TITANS vs. DELHI CAPITALS
Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 3
GT 2 | DC 1

PREVIOUS MEETING
DC won by five runs, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	7	6	1	12	0.677
Kolkata Knight Riders	6	4	2	8	1.399
Chennai Super Kings	6	4	2	8	0.726
Sunrisers Hyderabad	6	4	2	8	0.502
Lucknow Super Giants	6	3	3	6	0.038
Gujarat Titans	6	3	3	6	-0.637
Punjab Kings	6	2	4	4	-0.218
Mumbai Indians	6	2	4	4	-0.234
Delhi Capitals	6	2	4	4	-0.975
Royal Challengers	7	1	6	2	-1.185

Nadal in cruise mode on return to court

Agence France-Presse
BARCELONA

Rafael Nadal made light work of Flavio Cobolli on a triumphant return from injury at the Barcelona Open on Tuesday. The 22-time Grand Slam champion had not played an ATP Tour match since January but dispatched the Italian 6-2, 6-3 in one hour and 25 minutes to reach the second round.

Nadal, 37, played on clay for the first time since winning the 2022 French Open and showed flashes of his brilliance in a solid display.

"It was a good start – when you return you can't get rid of the doubts in one day, above all, on a physical level," said Nadal.

Nadal. AFP

INBRIEF

Michael Slater collapses after being refused bail

Former Test cricketer Michael Slater reportedly collapsed in an Australian court on Tuesday after being refused bail on more than a dozen charges, including some relating to stalking. The 54-year-old had to be helped to his feet by court staff after falling to the floor when a Queensland magistrate turned down his bail application, local media reported.

71.5 crore views on JioCinema for MI and CSK match

JioCinema logged over 71.5 crore views for the marquee fixture between Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings on April 14. The official streaming platform for the IPL amassed 933 crore minutes of watch time and 13 crore viewers, bettering the reach of 2023 IPL Final.

Lemma wins men's race; Obiri retains women's title

Ethiopian Sisay Lemma won the 2024 Boston Marathon on Monday after a solo surge early in the race gave him the platform to finish first in two hours, six minutes and 17 seconds. Compatriot Mohamed Esa took second place, 41 seconds behind while defending champion Evans Chebet of Kenya was third, one minute and five seconds off the winner. In the women's race, Kenya's Hellen Obiri clinched her second consecutive victory in Boston, crossing the finish line in two hours, 22 minutes, and 37 seconds, narrowly edging out compatriot Sharon Lokedi by eight seconds. Edna Kiplagat came third to complete Kenya's dominance.

Indian Greco-Roman grapplers draw a blank

Indian Greco-Roman grapplers finished their campaign in the Asian wrestling championships without a medal in Bishkek on Tuesday. Rohit Dahiya (82kg) who made it to bronze match lost to Uzbekistan's Mukhammadkhor Rasulov 3-1. India finished with four silver and five bronze.

Roma defender Evan Ndicka dischared from hospital

Roma defender Evan Ndicka was dischared from hospital on Monday, a day after he collapsed at the end of a Serie A match. Ndicka appeared to have suffered a collapsed left lung, Roma said on Monday. No cardiac issues were detected.

1974 WC winner Hoelzenbein passes away aged 78

Bernd Hoelzenbein, who won the World Cup with West Germany in 1974, passed away aged 78, his long-time club Eintracht Frankfurt announced on Tuesday. Hoelzenbein scored five goals in 40 matches for West Germany. In the 1974 World Cup final against the Netherlands in Munich, Hoelzenbein won the penalty converted by Paul Breitner which levelled the scores at 1-1.

Champions League quarterfinal second-leg schedule
Bayern Munich vs Arsenal
Manchester City vs Real Madrid
(Both matches ar 12.30 a.m., Thursday)

LIVE TELECAST

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Thursday)

Gukesh and Nepomniachtchi retain lead after agreeing to 40-move draw

Praggnanandhaa shares the second spot with Caruana and Nakamura; Vaishali registers a victory while Humpy holds joint-leader Tan

CANDIDATES CHESS

Sports Bureau

Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi and D. Gukesh, the overnight leaders at the Candidates chess tournament, drew their 10th round encounter at Toronto on Monday.

They have retained the joint-lead with six points each.

They are followed half-a-point behind by R. Praggnanandhaa and the two top-seeded Americans, Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura, who both won their games. The Indian had to settle for a draw, though.

Caruana defeated Alireza Firouzja of France, while Nakamura overcame Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan. Praggnanandhaa split the point with compatriot Vidit Gujrathi, who is in sixth position with five points.

Evenly matched: Nepomniachtchi and Gukesh battled it out before signing the peace treaty. FIDE

In the women's event, Lei Tingjie joined fellow-Chinese Tan Zhongyi at the top of the table, after her win against Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia.

Tan and Lei have six points each, while Goryachkina shares the third place with compatriot Kateryna Lagno, half-a-point behind the leaders.

Following them in fifth place with 4.5 points is Koneru Humpy, who drew with Tan.

The day also saw R. Vaishali finally ending her losing streak, with a win against Bulgaria's Nurgyul Salimova.

Fair result

The game between Nepomniachtchi and Gukesh reached a rook-and-pawn ending from a Ruy Lopez opening before the duo signed peace after 40 moves.

The 17-year-old from Chennai said: "I was Black, and he played a solid game, so it was a fair result. I am in good shape and hopefully it can continue in the last few games."

The all-Indian game between Praggnanandhaa and Gujrathi also featured Ruy Lopez and lasted 39 moves. The game was drawn by the repetition of moves.

The tournament will resume on Wednesday, after a day's rest.

The results (10th round):
Open: Ian Nepomniachtchi (FIDE) 6 drew with D. Gukesh 6; R. Praggnanandhaa 5.5 drew with Vidit Gujrathi 5.
Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 5.5 bt Nijat Abasov (Aze) 3; Fabiano Caruana (USA) 5.5 bt Alireza Firouzja (Fra) 3.5.
Women: Tan Zhongyi (Chn) 6.5 drew with Koneru Humpy 4.5; Aleksandra Goryachkina (FIDE) 5.5 lost to Lei Tingjie (Chn) 6.5; Kateryna Lagno (FIDE) 5.5 drew with Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 4; Nurgyul Salimova (Bul) 4 lost to R. Vaishali 3.5.

Entry standards for Federation Cup athletics announced

Sports Bureau
KOCHI

The 27th National Federation Cup athletics championships will be held at the Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, from May 12 to 15.

The Government of Odisha will conduct the event in association with the Odisha Athletics Association under the aegis of the Athletics Federation of India.

Only athletes who are 18 years and above (born on May 12, 2006 or before) and have achieved the AFI's entry standards in National or State championships, where electronic system had been used, are eligible to take part.

Entry standards: Men: 100m: 10.60s. **200m:** 21.70s. **400m:** 48.50s. **800m:** 1:52.00s. **1500m:** 3:50.00s. **5000m:** 14:40.00s. **10,000m:** 31.30.00s.

110m hurdles: 14.50s. **400m hurdles:** 51.30s. **3000m steeplechase:** 9:10.00s.

High jump: 2.00m. **Pole vault:** 4.40m. **Long jump:** 7.30m. **Triple jump:** 15.30m. **Shot put:** 16.20m. **Discus:** 50.00m. **Hammer:** 60.00m. **Javelin:** 70.00m. **Decathlon:** 5500 pts.

Women: 100m: 12.10s. **200m:** 24.50s. **400m:** 55.00s. **800m:** 2:15.00s. **1500m:** 4:30.00s. **5000m:** 17:00.00s.

10,000m: 35:00.00s. **100m hurdles:** 15.00s. **400m hurdles:** 1:02.00s. **3000m steeplechase:** 12:30.00s.

High jump: 1.60m. **Pole vault:** 3.30m. **Long jump:** 5.85m. **Triple jump:** 12.50m. **Shot put:** 13.50m. **Discus:** 43.00m. **Hammer:** 45.00m. **Javelin:** 46.00m. **Heptathlon:** 4000 pts.

Cole Palmer. AFP

Chelsea routs Everton

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Cole Palmer scored four goals to put Chelsea within touching distance of the Premier League's top six after a 6-0 win over Everton on Monday.

Palmer moved level with Manchester City striker Erling Haaland's 20 Premier League goals in the race for the Golden Boot.

The results: Premier League: Chelsea 6 (Palmer 13, 18, 29, 64-pen, Jackson 44, Gilchrist 90) bt Everton 0.
LaLiga: Osasuna 0 lost to Valenica 1 (Almeida 18).
Serie A: Atalanta 2 (Scamacca 13, Ederson 18) drew with Verona 2 (Lazovic 56, Noslin 60).

Indian Super League clubs that qualified for continental football this season

Sports Bureau

The league phase of the Indian Super League 2023-24 has finished, with Mohun Bagan Super Giant clinching the League Winners Shield after beating Mumbai City FC at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on Monday.

What effect does ISL have on Indian football in Asia?

New tournament plan

Last year, the Asian Football Confederation came up with a new tournament plan for football clubs in Asia that removed India from the top division because of its low ranking in AFC club competitions.

According to the new competition format, there will be three AFC Club competitions: AFC Champions League Elite, AFC Champions League 2, and AFC Challenge League.

India has been allotted two spots in the AFC Champions League 2, with one confirmed spot and the other, a preliminary one.

The ISL will have a maximum of four clubs which can have continental aspirations this season.

ISL playoff schedule
April 19: Knockout 1: Odisha FC (home) vs Kerala Blasters
April 20: Knockout 2: FC Goa (home) vs Chennaiyin FC
April 23: Semifinal 1 (First leg): Winner of Knockout 1 (home) vs Mohun Bagan Super Giant
April 24: Semifinal 2 (First leg): Winner of Knockout 2 (home) vs Mumbai City FC
April 28: Semifinal 1 (Second leg): MBSG (home) vs Winner of Knockout 1
April 29: Semifinal 2 (Second leg): MCFC (home) vs Winner of Knockout 2
The venue of the final will be announced soon

The entrants

Mohun Bagan earned a direct spot in the AFC Champions League 2 while the Kalinga Super Cup winner, East bengal, bagged a spot in the ACL 2 qualifying playoffs (preliminary spot).

Moreover, the clubs that finished in the second (Mumbai City FC) and third (FC Goa) spots in the league standings, will participate in the inaugural SAFF Club Championship this year.

When players go beyond cliches and illuminate the format

BETWEEN WICKETS
Suresh Menon

The IPL has made one thing clear over the years. There will be huge sixes, big scores, startling bowling figures, misreading of pitches, surprising results. But one thing won't see as often is the memorable quote or the telling comment. Putting the ball in the right areas is the bowler's favourite cliche while batters prefer to play it safe with: "I am taking it one game at a time – the idea is to go out there and enjoy yourself."

But occasionally a line emerges that causes the kind of surprise a maiden over might.

The essential honesty and self-awareness of a performer comes through, shining a light on himself while simultaneously making a comment on the format itself.

When the No.1 batter in the world, Suryakumar Yadav says, "It has been two or three years, (I) have never batted against Jasprit Bumrah in the nets," and explains why, "Either he breaks my bat or my foot," honesty, self-deprecation and admiration for a teammate are rolled into one admission.

Dispenser of possibilities

With ball in hand, Bumrah is a dispenser of possibilities. After his ridiculously short run-up, will he deliver a ball over 145kmph, a yorker, one screaming past or staying its course, a slower delivery, any of which he can do without an easily discernible change in action? The viewer is as keen as the batter, but enjoys the comfort of distance.

Asked how he did it, Bumrah told an interviewer at the end of a match where he had taken five wickets that he worked hard, kept going back to watch himself bowl and ensured he was not a one-trick pony. He summed it up with, "There is no ego in this format."

That's an interesting concept. But in fact, there are two kinds of ego in competitive sport; one positive, and perhaps necessary, the other destructive.

"I know everything there is to know about my craft, no one can get the better of me," is thinking that belongs to the negative kind of ego. "Batters might have worked out how to play me, I have to keep one step ahead of them with practice and experimentation," is the positive kind.

Bumrah, India's pride, is talking about the negative kind that has no place in any format.

Importance of data

If you played (and watched) cricket in the first eight decades of the last century, chances are you look down upon computers and data analysis as unnecessary.

"The only computer you need is between your ears," the great Bishan Bedi said often. Recently, the equally great Erapalli Prasanna told a fan, "Data cannot help you bowl better. It adds nothing to your skill."

This of course is correct. A leg spinner might know that a batter is weak against the googly based on the percentage of his dismissals to that delivery. But if he cannot bowl a googly himself, that data cannot help him.

Sport throws up so much data on a running basis that sometimes it can get too much even for the player. So when Sunil Narine, KKR's opening batter says, "I have one role, and the less I know the better it is for me," he is telling us how he clears his mind of irrelevancies. His strike rate after five matches is 183, and he is in the wonderful position of knowing that his batting is a bonus in a team where he is the leading spinner. Why clutter his mind, therefore? His role is clear: see ball, hit ball.

His 39-ball 85 against Delhi Capitals was the foundation of victory. He will fail on occasion, but even if he succeeds only forty percent of the time, he would have done his job at the top.

Clarity

Few batters in the IPL have such clarity. A Rohit Sharma or a Virat Kohli might like to think their job too is 'see ball, hit ball', but they know that they have greater responsibilities. The state of the match matters, the job of blunting the opposition's main bowler is theirs, their dismissal can demoraliSe those waiting to bat.

So there you have it. Three quotes, from a top batter, a great bowler and a leading all-rounder. There's hope. We are not yet at the half-way stage.

Traditional start: Ntouskos, the first torch-bearer, receives the flame from the 'High Priestess' Mary Mina. GETTY IMAGES

Olympic flame lit for 2024 Paris Games

Reuters
OLYMPIA

The torch for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games was lit in ancient Olympia in a traditional ceremony on Tuesday, marking the final stretch of the seven-year preparations for the Games' start on July 26.

Greek actress Mary Mina, playing the role of high priestess, lit the torch using a backup flame instead of a parabolic mirror that is normally used, due to cloudy skies, for the start of a relay in Greece and France.

The high priestess then lit the torch of the first runner of the relay, Greece's Olympic rowing champion Stefanos Ntouskos.

After a short run he then handed the flame on to France's three-time Olympic medallist in swimming and head of Paris' Olympic torch relay, Laure Manaudou, as the representative of the host city.

The flame will be officially handed over to Paris Games organisers in Athens's Panathenaic stadium, site of the first modern Games in 1896, on April 26 after an 11-day relay across Greece.

The French torch relay will last 68 days and will end in Paris with the lighting of the Olympic flame on July 26.

"In these difficult times we are living through, with wars and conflicts on the rise, people are fed up with all the hate, the aggression and negative news they are facing day in and day out," International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach said in his speech.